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Paris Originals

ILLUSTRATED

A. EGMONT HAKE

PARIS ORIGINALS.

Léon Richeton

PARIS ORIGINALS.

BY

A. EGMONT HAKE.

"Paris semble, a mes yeux, un pays de romans."—CORNEILLE.

WITH TWENTY ETCHINGS BY LÉON RICHETON.

LONDON:
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PARIS ORIGINALS.

THE CHIFFONNIER.

THE Parisians, like true children of Nature, dutifully adopt her great law, and among them, with all their show of waste, nothing is wasted. Things that lose their worth in the estimation of one set have their value for another; what one casts away another picks up; that which falls from the tables of Saint-Germain and the Chaussée d'Antin is served again under some new disguise in the Chaussée du Maine, and in the Rue Mouffetard. So it was in the days of parables; so it is still more in these hard realistic times.

Out of this condition of things has sprung that organization in which industry reaches its lowest ebb —the fraternity of *chiffonniers*.

This pariah of the Boulevards prowls along the kerb-stone under the shadow of the trees. His ghastly lantern, which hangs from his hand by a chain, is

flaring at his feet; his *hotte* weighs like a hump upon his bent back; his *crochet* busy among the *débris* of the gutter. Seen from the glare of the gay pavements, he seems a spirit of the night groping along the outer margin of a lit-up world. For him seems reversed the order of things; he is like a spectre that, instead of haunting the living, is himself haunted as by a *fata morgana* of loitering multitudes, and a garish array of busy shops and *cafés*. A crowd of all nationalities passes before him; frail daughters of pleasure as they trip along leave laughter in his ears; there is the majestic Arab, in white flowing robe, with the grand swing of the camel; there is the lithe and cat-like Persian, clad in rich crimson; there is the sinister Parsee in European garb, and blue-tasselled fez—a vast procession of realities defiling before this ghostly inhabitant of the outer gloom—this one shadow in a pageantry of dreams.

These thoughts passed through my mind, as, seated at my *café*, sipping my glass of sherbet, I gazed upon one of these night wanderers. I got up, and went towards the spot where he was busied. He was raking up a heap of rubbish as I neared him, and flinging pieces of paper over his shoulder into his *hotte*, but on seeing me approach, he suddenly stopped in his work, and turned sharply round as if to seek a reason for my

intrusion. I shuddered at the sight of his pale, worn face, his wild, haggard eyes, and for a moment halted. This creature, I thought, has some awful trouble. Is it fair to obtrude myself upon him? So I threw a five-franc piece, by way of offering some consolation, into the heap over which he stood, and withdrew. But his face haunted me; it made me think of his strange brotherhood, and of a visit I had once paid to some of their dens behind the Panthéon.

Full of these recollections, I determined upon revisiting their colony, and seeing if any material changes had taken place among them. I wandered leisurely towards the Quartier Latin, and making my way through the time-honoured Rue Saint-Jacques, soon came upon the Montagne Ste. Geneviève. A little further, and I found myself in the Rue Mouffetard —that Judengasse of *chiffonniers* and *ramoneurs*.

I entered this rookery: some of its denizens were starting on their nocturnal wanderings; some were gathered round the various wine shops, so numerous in this quarter, engaged in discussing the doings of the day, or the project for the coming night; others had formed themselves into knots around well-filled baskets, and were occupied in carefully sorting the refuse they contained. This lighter work of distribution, mostly done by the elder members of the sister-

hood of *chiffonnières*, was a strange sight—those yellow-skinned squaws pecking like birds of prey at the freshly-hunted spoil, bringing up stray cigar-ends destined to find their way again in new forms to fastidious lips, snatching at bones, hereafter to take a place in carved fancy shapes on the tables of the *salon*; in a word assigning to their several fates scraps of paper, old nails, and half a hundred other kinds of rubbish picked up on the previous night's journey.

There was something touching in the sight of these several groups, coming as I had just done from a scene of brilliance where that one dark figure, a representative of their wretched lot, walked along. These poor creatures are, as a rule, the hirelings of rag princes, who send them, for a mere pittance, in search of refuse. Some of them, however, unite themselves into independent clubs, and divide the proceeds gathered from the contents of their *hottes*. Their average earnings seldom exceed a franc a day, and with such a scanty means of subsistence, their mode of life is of necessity, miserable in the extreme. Some of the windows of their houses being open, I noticed what large numbers were crowded together in a single room, and, as I had often heard, these slept on tiled floors, with nothing better than the rags upon their backs as coverings, and their *hotte* as a pillow. Their

restaurants offer of themselves a wide field for study. They are examples of that genius for economy which so distinguishes Parisians of the *bas étage*. Upon the windows of some of the cabarets were placards announcing *déjeuners* and dinners at incredibly low prices. The *chiffonnier* seldom spends more than six sous upon his dinner, and half that sum upon his *déjeuner*.

There used to be a *caboulot* in this very neighbourhood called *Au Hasard de la Fourchette*, a favourite resort of *chiffonniers*, where dinner was advertised over the door at one sou. The system upon which the restaurateur of this eating-house worked was this: its frequenters, upon paying their sou in advance, took their places at a huge cauldron with a goodly fork chained to its side; each, in turn taking the fork in hand, was free to plant its prongs into the seething mass, fishing out what chance might bring him in the way of a savoury morsel of meat or a disappointing bone. This restaurant for a long time had a considerable *clientèle*, but I missed it, and on inquiry found that it had been, like many another curious haunt, swept away by the inexorable Haussmann. And this calls to mind a gathering-place of the bloused inhabitants of Montrouge with which I was once acquainted, quite as curious in its way as this one of the Fork Luck type.

It was the *estaminet* called Calédonie, which mustered monster meetings daily from eleven till two and five till eight, and among whose visitors were not a few of our chiffonnier friends. Here I have seen no less than eight hundred persons sit down to dinner, each paying the sum of six sous. The noise during the proceedings baffles all description—the clatter of plates, the rattle of cans, the shouts, the singing, the stamping of feet, created a hubbub which might have been taken for a culinary insurrection.

I had now reached the lower extremity of the street, and was looking at a white flower-strewn bier placed under a gateway before which many as they passed raised their hats; at the same time my attention was arrested by a loud scraping of fiddles and a continual pattering of feet. On the opposite side there was a large well-lighted window with a blind, across the white surface of which a procession of shadow figures brushed to and fro in the quick movements of a dance. A *chiffonniers'* ball was being held there; they were going through a quadrille with all those supplementary gestures introduced by the great Rigolboche, a *danseuse* to whom the notorious can-can owes its origin.

There was something weird in this proximity of shadow-life and death, for the bier by which I stood

no less held me to the spot than did the fascination of watching the violent gyrations of those dancing shades: some of them, lifting their arms in seeming coquetry with space, grew smaller and smaller till they dwindled into dwarf forms and vanished, while others, pirouetting round retiring partners, took giant shapes and for a moment obscured all the light.

Whilst watching this strange pantomime, I felt something touch my arm, and turning round, what should I see but the gaunt figure I had left on the Boulevard.

"Monsieur," he said, "has been very amiable to me. Monsieur will have the goodness to come in."

He said it in the purest Parisian accent, and in a manner that made it impossible to refuse him. I followed. We passed through the gateway where stood the gaily-decked bier, and entered a small but neatly-kept room, in which an old dame sat rocking herself to and fro, and crying out "*O mon ange adoré!*" in an agony of grief.

"What is this trouble that you have?" I asked of the poor *chiffonnier*, who was now trying to comfort the old dame.

"Ah! Monsieur, we are inconsolable. My grandson" —pointing towards the gateway—"is the last of our race,—for I am dead. Monsieur, you look astonished. It is well. I would not tell all the world. That poor

child, were the Bourbons still on the throne, would have been heir to one of the finest *châteaux* in France. These rags," he said, while the nerves of his face twitched violently, "are all I have now. The glory of France is gone; she is in the dust—no better than a *chiffonnier* on the high-road of nations. Had they but been true to our good king all had been well; but no, my fickle compatriots must have new fashions even in their rulers. *C'est une honte.* And because I was true to my king, I am this outcast."

"But," I said, "you surely could have found some better exile than this?"

"Oh! I have not been long at this," he said, with pride. "I have tried many things. I have been *commissionnaire—concierge*, but they always discovered in me the old Legitimist. You will smile when I tell you that a Chamberlain's key once hung here," said he, placing his finger on his worn coat; "but I am really happier now than I was then, for I know the worst, and can descend no lower."

THE YOUNG CHIFFONNIÈRE.

On taking leave of my new friend the *chiffonnier*, I promised to visit him again before long, but such engagements, made with good intentions at the time, are not always faithfully kept. I allowed the summer to drag along: on one of its glorious nights when Paris, after dozing the scorching hours away, had awakened towards sunset from its long siesta and come forth to regale itself under the breezy moonlight, I was again among the *cafés* on the Boulevards, which were crammed as ever with loungers, and with waiters who had stagnated all day in corners, and were now briskly chasing heavy laden salvers through the aisles of out-door tables while the mixed throng of idlers moved listlessly along; the scene only enlivened by the swift transit of some *grisette* hurrying along like a falling star.

Amidst the wanton waste and studied self-indulgence that surrounded me, I fell into the thought of those

strange wanderers of the night, the *chiffonniers*: how, when pleasure is on the wane and the glare of shops and *cafés* grows dim, they creep forth from their hiding-place, and grope for their daily bread in the deep shadows of those Boulevards, with their baskets on their backs, with their dull lanterns, and their pointed sticks; how they ransack the strewn gutters and pick out, with the instinct of spoonbills, the refuse that will best requite their ill-paid labour.

Whether the circles in which we move are wide or narrow, we certainly find that the same impulse as we have been moved by before leads us again into the same situation; indeed, while I found myself once more approaching the *chiffonnier* quarter, it seemed as if the night had returned on which I had visited it before.

I went straight to the house of my acquaintance, purposing to obtain further information from his wife should he not have returned home, and await his arrival. I found, however, that he had not been out for several nights, that he was sick and feeble, and what made me congratulate myself most on my visit was, that he was greatly in need of help. I had much conversation with him, and learnt much about the *chiffonniers* which I might not otherwise have come across. It is a humble community, but not without its social organi-

zation. I found that, without any code of laws, they have a clear understanding among themselves about their different beats, and one member is never known to poach upon the preserves of another. If two should chance upon a rubbish-heap still undisturbed, it becomes the property of the one who first touches it with the magic *crochet*. Their rounds ended, they carry the contents of their *hotte* to the *triage* or sorting-place, and there the *olla podrida* is carefully examined and afterwards disposed of for various uses: the old bones being sold to turners for the making of fans; the cigar-ends to small tobacconists, who find in them material for cigarettes. Sometimes a whole family of *chiffonniers* are joint proprietors of a *hotte* and *crochet*, and divide the profits of their pickings; but, as a rule, these people are hirelings working for rag and bone princes.

The more I saw of my acquaintance the more was I disposed to believe his story, for all that he told me was characterised by an intelligence which certainly belonged to a higher grade. I learnt from him how much good has been done for these interesting people by M. Verdier, the Chiffonnier Philanthropist, who, in order to know them and their ways of life, enlisted in their ranks, and took to the *hotte* and *crochet*. Paul Verdier was born at Châteaufort, of a good family; he

received a sound education at the Seminary at Versailles, afterwards finishing at the Collège de Senlis. His studies at the last were signalised by a double triumph ; in three months he obtained the degree of bachelor of arts and of sciences. He then proceeded to Paris to study law, but the sudden death of both his parents caused him to abandon this plan. Left an orphan and master of a large fortune, he determined to set about the good work of relieving the miseries of the *chiffonniers*. To carry out this project to his satisfaction, he felt it necessary to become one of them, and he accordingly joined the tribe that are settled in a place called Butte-aux-Cailles in the district of Saint-Jacques. Here he laboured for their good for many years, and he has now founded an Union for them from which the members derive much relief. His society numbers 500, and, by means of a trifling subscription, has now a considerable fund, from which annuities are paid to worn-out members, and the cost is covered of bringing up several orphans.

"As you are so interested," said my informant, "about these poor people,"—a phrase which showed me more than anything that he still felt distinct from that wretched class,—"you might like to witness a ball which at this moment is going on among our nomads."

I was pleased at the idea, and he gave me directions where to go. I passed through a number of narrow ill-lighted streets in the neighbourhood of the Rue Mouffetard. The passages were crammed with loiterers, some squatting upon their doorsteps, some gathered in their shop-windows, others grouped in knots about corners, and all vying with each other as usual in violent declamation. A little further on and I was under a low doorway with an illuminated canopy announcing in Brobdingnagian letters a "Bal." I heard, amidst the opening and slamming of doors, the intermittent strains of stringed instruments from within. Wedging my way through a narrow passage, I came to a little slip-window where an admission ticket was handed me for the modest sum of six sous, this payment including the cost of a half-litre bottle of Bordeaux.

On entering, my ticket was seized by a little shaggy, rat-like man, who, pointing with his nose to a wooden table near, bade me be seated, and the half-litre of Bordeaux quickly followed me up, borne by a wrinkled old dame (such as is indigenous only to Paris), who placed it before me with the air of a duchess.

The room was long and narrow, and all round it was ranged a wooden barrier about three feet high.

Behind this were placed rows of small tables well filled with various types of *chiffonniers*, imbibing their bottles of Bordeaux. At the end sat the artistes of the orchestra, and in the centre space, formed by the fencing, were the several groups of dancers. They were in full whirl now, and seemed thoroughly enjoying the fun.

The dancing was often quaint, but never coarse, and might be taken as a model when compared with that at Bullier's or Mabille. The women, some of them miserably clad, moved about quietly enough; indeed, to any one unacquainted with a mode of motion peculiar to Frenchmen they might almost have seemed like witches exercising some spell over the movements of their victims, for men possessed with a thousand devils could not have performed more delirious gyrations than some of their partners. One of these I noticed especially, a fierce-looking, unshaven fellow, with his cap planted at the back of his unkempt, bushy head, his chin twisted sideways in the air: he put his legs and arms through a variety of the wildest movements, sometimes lifting his feet above his head, or tossing his arms about with the laxity of a disjointed acrobat, and all the while working his features into fiendish distortions, finishing with a series of elaborate pirouettes. All this is done in a moment whilst

crossing to his fair partner, and with the facility of a Grimaldi.

A guard is placed at the door to check political discussions, but among the groups assembled at the tables many a significant whisper and dark glance is exchanged as they clink together their glasses of wine.

After I had been there perhaps an hour watching and being watched, my eye caught sight of a new comer among the crowd of dancers. It was a young girl of about nineteen, tall and beautiful, with still the traces of "sunburnt mirth" upon her face. She became at once the belle of the ball, and was soon surrounded by would-be partners. She had on a blue bodice, tied at the waist with a piece of white cord, a red petticoat reaching to her knees, yellow stockings, and pointed boots. Upon her head she bore a white cap, frilled at the edge, from which was visible a ragged ridge of shorn hair, which gave to her large lustrous brown eyes a look intensely eager and weird. I learned from the proprietor of the place that she had lately come to Paris, he thought from Savoy, whence so many emigrate, in the hope of finding the pavement of gold. She had fallen, he said, among a sad crew of these people, and a night or two before, whilst sleeping in one of their squalid haunts, she woke up to find all

her hair, which was of unusual length, cut off to the roots.

"Some one," he added chuckling, "made good capital of it with the *négociants*. She is a fine girl enough," he went on, "but, *sapristi!* she can't be among us long."

PROFESSEURS DE LANGUES.

WHEN we consider that Paris is the centre of this talking world, that its inner circle of travel sweeps the Baltic, the Adriatic, the Mediterranean from Egypt to Morocco, and thence cuts across the British Isles to the Baltic again; when we consider that its outer circle of travel reaches from Archangel round Asia to the Oceanides, and grazing the Cape and Cape Horn passes round America and returns by the North Pole; when we consider that Paris, the centre of these remote regions, radiates into the very heart of each, gathering into its focus all nationalities, and that travellers who come to it bring with them at least one language—namely, their native tongue—some to teach it there, some to learn the native tongue of other immigrants—it may be supposed that in this same capital of the world there is such an institution as the Tower of Babel.

While this wandering influx of strange races from

strange lands inundates Paris, and is the source whence Professors of Language in general have their origin, the deserving native preceptor still finds an opening, and, for the most part, monopolises the teaching of his own tongue. But though he is at home, and among his own people, his lot is almost as sorry a one as that of the adventurers who pursue their equivocal career in the world-wide field of instruction. For the native preceptor, despite his vantage-ground, is at best but a poor weakling—the victim of arrogant schoolmasters, the butt of ill-conditioned boys; tyrannised over by the one and tormented by the other, he is not, even on his own honest ground, a representative man, but rather occupies the mean and meaningless position of a social nonentity.

How different with the *soi-disant* Professeur de Langues, among whose groupings are to be found the broken-down marchese, the scutcheonless count, the unhorsed and swordless ritter, the unpensioned Garibaldian, the unrequited *littérateur*, the enervated rake, the dice-haunted gamester, besides napkinless waiters, non-commissioned valets, and cosmopolitan couriers whose round is done—not to mention the philosophical Siberian and the Cochin Chinese. These and more come flocking, and bring with them that inestimable treasure, their native tongue, which sticks to them to the last.

I had often heard incidentally that these proletary linguists formed a considerable company, but had always regarded them as a scattered people—not like the Jews among the nations, but, as things are now, like the nations among the Jews. Once upon a time, however, by a mere accident, I found myself in the very thick of their ranks. It happened in this way. One evening I sallied forth to pay a visit to one Herr Mühlheim, a German gentleman unknown to me, to whom I bore letters of introduction.

The address given me was No. 10, Place Saint Sulpice. It was a dark night. There was a difficulty in finding his hotel, and I got to the wrong one after all. The *concierge* directed me to the door of a room where, as she sleepily told me, Herr Mühlheim lived. I rapped and was requested to enter, mistrusting the locality all the time, and as I soon saw, with good reason. The next moment I was in a small room with a damp red-tiled floor, a truckle-bed in the one corner and a deal table in the other, covered with ungainly-looking books and papers. There sat a black figure between me and a guttering candle. This monk-like person rose and saluted me: I thought to myself, "Why, a priest." His black toga reaching to his feet was wound tightly round his legs, the collar was turned up against his pale face. His lank black

hair intensified two light grey eyes, which were directed abstractedly towards me. He bade me in Southern German take his chair, and seated himself upon a corner of the bed.

"I am afraid," said I, hesitatingly, "I have been misdirected."

At this he bowed low towards the unfilled chair and surrounded me with profuse salaams, made touchingly expressive by the alabaster paleness of his hands. I seated myself, momently interested in him, and not a little impressed by his dignified bearing.

"Then you are not Herr Mühlheim?"

"No," he said "that is not my name; but it is no matter—be at your ease."

After a brief interval, lengthened out by the awkwardness of the situation, I got up, and, as I approached the door to leave, I saw placarded on the walls, *Tour de Babel, Leçons Particulières dans toutes les langues, Rue du Bac.* While I was yet reading the placard he observed,

"I am Franz Pinno; I belong to that institution, and am just going to my German class. Will you accompany me?"

The offer was too tempting to refuse, and in a few minutes we were on our way together to the Tower of Babel, Herr Pinno telling me about the system of

teaching as we went along. It seemed that the professors gave lessons on certain terms laid down by the principal, a Monsieur Ludovec, who required of them a commission on every lesson they gave, either at the evening classes of the Tour de Babel or in any of the *arrondissements*. There was no fixed fee; it was left entirely to each professor to obtain all he could. The price generally being regulated according to the position of pupils, the first thing was to find out people's means prior to negociating with them. A lesson might fetch twenty francs, or only a single franc: the Russians and the South Americans were the best paymasters; Germans, Italians, and Greeks the worst.

A good deal of cheating went on in the scramble for pupils, and the professors made many secret engagements to avoid paying the commission to Ludovec. Every teacher, my ingenuous informant told me, was bound to show the principal his agreement for lessons among the public before commencing work, hard terms in return for the scant certainty obtained through the classes, and the patronage of the institution. Ludovec, knowing the crafty professors he had to deal with, would himself make engagements for them, as if in the pupil's name, in order to test their honesty, and these engagements, as may be supposed, seldom found their way voluntarily to his bureau.

Out of this system arose contentions, changes in the staff, and often scenes of violence, so wide-spread that all the nations in the world, each represented by one great man, seemed engaged on a war of words. This Ludovec was, if anything, a more active scamp than any of his *employés*, and in the long run was a match for them all. He was a Pole, who had served in a similar and really creditable institution, but had so persistently swindled his superior that it ended in his discharge. He had suavity, which, happily combined with an unblushing front, enabled him to gain over a whole section of pupils on starting his opposition under the apt designation, Tour de Babel—a name suggested to him in joke, but which he seized on in earnest. Having worked out a programme in blue, black, and red letters for the teaching, among other things, of five languages in one, his next step was to plaster it over all the walls and hoardings of Paris. By this means he rapidly gathered innumerable professors and pupils to his quarters, chartering the former on *pro ratâ* terms to give lessons to the latter.

In due time Herr Pinno and I reached the Rue du Bac, and entered a range of spacious but poorly furnished rooms on the *premier étage*, not so much of the proprietor's scanty capital having been apparently spent on chairs and tables as on the

emblematic tower which stood in relief over the door outside.

Herr Pinno introduced me to the sub-director, and went into an adjoining room to his class. The sub-director was one of those beardless Americans who have large melancholy eyes and heavy underjaw, partitioned by that tail of hair which some call *impériale*, some *royale*, but which it is to be hoped the transatlantics who adopt it will in due time consistently call *républicaine*. He talked impressively, and withal so resignedly, that he seemed to say as he addressed me, "I guess, stranger, you'll find me an ex-president down on his luck."

One flare of gas, large enough to give play to twenty graceful jets, smokily lit up the room, and showed a group of various nationalities, such as might have met on a market-place in China or Thibet, to be finally transferred in many colours to some Oriental fan. Conspicuous among the rest was a Thibetan high-priest in a long yellow robe, with his praying machine resting on his arm. This man had been sent by his sect to Europe to examine Christianity, chiefly in reference to the forms of the Protestant and Catholic religions, with a view to the adoption of one or the other by his people. He was in close conversation with a red-capped Russian, who was endeavouring to

impress upon him the superior truth of the Greek Church doctrines, and the enormous advantages these would afford to the Thibetans, since the time was fast approaching when the great Russian nation would overrun his country, and it would be better for them to be prepared by their religion to become a portion of the great Asian empire.

I had some conversation with him about his doctrines. He told me that they were very little understood even by his own people, though they were in possession of a quantity of sacred writings which should throw light upon their religion. But there were very few who could read them. Sometimes they received visits from the wise men of other countries; one of the most remarkable that he remembered was an American from Pennsylvania who, on being shown one of these precious writings, interpreted it to the priest and others who placed it before him, with so much ease and impressiveness that they fell at his feet. When the people of the district heard this, they all flocked round him from the neighbouring villages, and led him to the temple. There the high-priest explained to those assembled all that he had heard, and addressed them in the presence of the stranger, telling them that all things were known to the wise men of the west, and that one of these had come among them.

My informant added that his people had entreated the traveller to remain in their land, and to further explain to them the things which they had forgotten; but he could not do this, and he advised them to send one of their priests to Europe to study the religions of the West, which contained many new revelations, and to choose from among them one more fitted to his people than the creed which they followed.

"My people," he said, "did as he had bidden them; they thought long over these things, and taking counsel of each other, they sent me here in search of the new Buddha."

He raised his eyes, and his hand was once more on his praying machine.

Then there was a little Chinese in full azure costume, with long gesticulating arms, and large callow head, who pertinaciously threw in his squeaky plea for Confucius in the most unsyntactical French. The conversational form of this little man was in keeping with his alphabet; it was symbolic. Everything he said was seconded by the almost grimacing play of his lank flexible fingers, and an upward movement of his nose and arms.

There was a Spaniard near watching the controversialists, who indulged his humour every now and then by laughing gruffly at the shrill arguments of the

Chinese. This base accompaniment to his own voice irritated the little Asiatic, whose pinched eyes seemed to gather into their concentrated centres every affront offered to his religion by the sarcastic Spaniard. The situation grew warmer; while the Russian maintained his cold resolute manner, the Buddhist poured forth his opinions like one adoring, and occasionally turned his machine in prayer; but the little Confucian lost all self-command, and flinging up his arms, crooned out, "*Vive Confucius!*" The Spaniard laughed again. The Chinaman hopped towards him, and stood under his swaying figure, working his arms furiously up and down, exclaiming, "*Vous riez de moi! Moi casser tout!*" upon which he seized upon a chair, which I heard fall with considerable violence on the table or the floor, amidst a babel of tongues, as I made my way down the stairs.

Leon Richeson

THE MOUCHARD.

Balzac, in his "Histoire des Treize," enlarges upon the subject of the streets of Paris and the resemblance of their physiognomy to divers human qualities. He cites infamous streets, noble streets, simply honest streets, young streets about whose morality the public has not yet formed its opinion, streets busy, streets lazy, streets dirty, and streets clean.

In such a classification the well-baptized Rue de la Gaieté obviously comes under streets gay—and it certainly is the most uproarious of the noisy neighbourhoods about the *barrières*. From where it begins at the dreary, dawdling Boulevard Montrouge, to where it ends at the untidy, slip-shod Chaussée du Maine, it presents from sundown till midnight a scene of unceasing riot.

The lower denizens of this neighbourhood—flat, empty, and dead by day, as if the streets had been swept by cannon—bubble up nightly on its surface,

and from groups pass into crowds, from stillness into jollity, when singing and playing and dancing go on without pause.

Its noisy precincts enclose the Théâtre Mont parnasse, where the company enjoy a larger share of aspiration than is to be accounted for by the uninspired acting, but which leads them into choosing the delicate and refined comedies of the Français and the Palais-Royal for the display of their inadequate powers, instead of pieces like the *Chevalier du Brouillard*—the French Jack Sheppard—to represent whose characters they are in all respects competent, their sympathies being illicit.

Opposite to this building stands the radiant and gaudy Folies-Bobino, where pictorial placards offer a various *menu* of entertainment ranging from billiards to ballet, and free to all comers disposed to take a *consommation*. But no outward emblazonment can convey an idea of the entertainment going on within.

It is a discovery of the present day that the best comedies are to be seen not in the great, high-priced theatres, but in a place like the Théâtre Montparnasse, where tragedy excites mirth even to the splitting of your sides, and where comedy is doubly comic, owing to the scenes of fashion which it represents, gravitating in the most naïve and natural

manner into high life below stairs. The countess thus becomes her own lady's maid in her own borrowed attire; the count his own valet in his own court dress, and without a hint to that effect both plebeianize the part to perfection, with the droll element of their believing themselves to be real mistresses and masters in the very pink of fashion. It is not therefore surprising that when you laugh at their comical performances the actors feel flattered; what is surprising and humorous in the extreme is that when you laugh at their most tragic efforts, they actually believe your merriment to be a form of applause. Such is the stage where comedy and tragedy are one, but to a thinking mind, the billiard room of the Folies Bobino is yet more suggestive; you see gathered there a reserve force that has its times of peace, but which always holds itself in readiness to fight for the revolutions of its country. How thankful would its roughs be to march two and two to the Comédie Française with torches, and commit it, with its elegantly attired occupants, to the flames!

A few doors from this is the Grand Café de la Gaieté, which, with even more seductive placards, invites the crowd of idlers gathered round its doors to share a still more seductive hospitality. Besides these halls of harmony there are not a few dancing-

halls and beer-gardens, with a dazzling array of *cafés, cabarets, bouillons, estaminets, traiteurs,* and *caboulots.*

From the pre-eminently plebeian character of the quarter, it might be imagined that its places of entertainment and good cheer present an aspect of meanness and squalor. This is by no means the case. The inhabitants of Montrouge belong, it is true, to the lower stratum of society—they are the pariahs of Paris—but they are, to take a word from their own vocabulary, *petits crevés* to the backbone. The appearance of things is to them as all-important as to their more pecunious brother Parisians. So these pleasure-haunts make a very fair show, many of them are even large, and all are radiant with Venetian glasses. Thus the unshorn *ouvrier,* with pipe and *champoreau,* may survey himself through as good an avenue of mirrors as any *péquin chic,* with scented cigarette and champagne *frappé,* of the Chaussée d'Antin.

As a gathering of the lower types, the most interesting of all these places is the dancing-hall at the corner, called the Bal Constant. Here, among the company, there is none of that backing hesitation, none of that smiling apology and supercilious condescension noticeable in all other circles. The freemasonry of vice carries with it a graceful ease, and the music once

set in motion, the dancers give themselves up to reckless expression, extemporising antics, giddy as they are grotesque.

Only the *mouchard*, with sinister glance and chuckle, holds himself apart from the crowd, watching for his prey as the *petit bleu* is measured out, and as the dancers whirl round. He is a social ferret sent in search of social vermin—the sworn enemy of the *voyou* and the *fille de joie*, whose every step he watches with cruel vigilance, and follows up. Instinctively they know him at a glance, and each fresh encounter adds something to their hate, while they thirst for a new Commune to take out their long nursed revenge. The *mouchard*, apart from the animosity he arouses by dint of his odious duties, is an object of special hate to the general public, on account of his former connexion with the Imperial Guard, from the ranks of which he was often drawn, and though haply devoid of political bias he is still a symbol of Imperialism, and as such calls forth a fair share of republican rancour. Added to all this, his appearance is dead against him, and of itself awakens distrust.

There he prowls, behind a pillar handy to the door, low of stature, bony, but of a vigorous build—his coat is grimy, it has through neglect lapsed into the moss-green hue, his face is worn, his nose is pointed, and

the long shaggy moustache seems growing out of it. His bonus upon making an arrest is two francs a head, so he is a good deal tempted to abuse his authority, and being often an enfranchised criminal, the conscience of this Jonathan Wild has been thoroughly broken in. He has someone in his view, but it is hard to say which among the crowd of revellers, for he apparently takes a general survey of what is going on, whilst actually keeping from the corner of his eye a narrow watch upon a particular victim. Meantime he stands there while the valse has changed to a quadrille, and the gratings of hoarse violins give way to more harmonious sounds.

Beginning with graceful undulations towards the centre of the *salon*, the dance gradually grows in energy till at last the dancers lose all self-control, and break out into the wildest capers. One leaps up in mid-air, and falls wheeling round on tip-toe; another, flinging his loosened arms to right and left, swings round his partner with pavonine pride, and recedes superciliously; another, while his hands score the air, beats the devil's tattoo upon the floor, and springs up now and then like a rampant jerboa; another, standing still, gives himself up to a series of grotesque caprioles, frisking, curvetting, dropping his neck, and coquetting with his upturned heels; all are carried away

in a whirl of excitement that springs up, swells, and falls away with the music. Here is a bright streaming ribbon, there red stockings, and, behind the rails, the shining helmet and white belt of an occasional gendarme, to give a bold colouring to the scene, which exceeds in picturesqueness all the harmonised tints of an aristocratic assemblage.

Meantime the *mouchard* has not budged an inch from the position he has taken up in the shadow of the pillar; he has had no share in the riot going on; he has remained a calm observer of the scene. But there is a change in his looks; just a flicker of light from the corner of an eye, as from a dark lantern.

On the opposite side stands a tall woman in a loose flowing dress, that, as she moves, twists and twirls into a hundred serpentine shapes. Beside her is a gay, rakish-looking lad, in a black coat and white ducks; his hair, cut into an uneven fringe, falls towards his eyes from a cap poised on the back of his head. She now glides under the garish light with movements quick and supple as the gambols of a cat in the sun; now her slim head is thrown back, as her eyes coquettishly rest on her boy-lover's; now, at some word from him, she gives him a playful tap on the cheek, and steps back a pace or two, triumphing in a burst of laughter. In a moment a change comes over her; her

eyes have in them a horrid glitter; her hands spring up towards her face, then drop listlessly at her side, she lifts the folds of her dress, and darts towards the entrance. The *mouchard* makes a spring and disappears with her behind the slamming door. There is a scuffle, a loud scream, the buzz of voices has ceased, but the jangling music goes on.

Richeton

ARTISTS' MODELS.

A SCHOOL of art is as contemptible an institution as a school of poetry or prose; it means a set of workers who try to excel each other in following out some original artist's ideas or modes, while all the time that original is the one scholar of Nature, but even he is but a scholar with that one great model as his master. The school, as it is called, is a busy host, always in search of models that will help them to imitate the master-idea; his, who is alone able to initiate a method and a style through which he diffuses the riches of his soul. While he is one, the artists are many; the latter resort to nature in a limited way; they work under the vaticinations of the great one whose ideas have so possessed them that they believe them to be their own. So far they are the amanuenses of Nature, for they cannot do a stroke without a face or a form before them, writing down what the oracle says in pencil, chalk or paint, from morning till night, and

though not collected together in one great schoolroom, they form as busy a body as the clerks in a clearing-house or a bank.

These meritorious men who thus make one idea multiform, make model-hunting one of the principal pursuits of their life.

The Paris model-hunters sally forth into the grisette-quarters, where the poor girls having worked off their fingers in hemming and stitching for pay, are willing to earn an extra *sou* in displaying their beauty before lank-haired and languishing fops, who, in their turn, live by copying and selling female charms. But it is not every artist who can select a good model, or attitudinise it when he has got one. There is many a girl who is very beautiful, but who does not serve for a model in high art; all have not expression, much less variety of expression; not all have dramatic skill in assuming the character required. The Parisian artist has not the same taste in model-choosing as the Italian, the English or even the German possesses; he rarely selects the universal face, that which approaches nearest to the ideal of woman, but has a passion for that which most resembles his own, the French visage. Charming as the features of a French-woman are, for the purposes of lively conversation, naïve expression and social intercourse generally, the

type is strictly national and local. Apelles could never have painted his Venus from a Frenchwoman; her very expression would have spoken French instead of Greek; but Gustave Doré might any day paint a Jeanne d'Arc from a Phryne or a Campaspe.

A man from whom I learned a good deal about models was De Lannière, an artist whom I was once much in the habit of visiting. He was fond of having friends about him while he worked. The first thing he would say to you on entering, after the first salutation, was, "Have you got the spleen? I have had it *à mourir* all the morning." Then he would pass his hand over his forehead and long hair, with a momentary look of agony, give a deep sigh, and the next moment be as gay as ever. His studio was a large room in which a sufficient space was kept clear for company and work; for the rest it was in great disorder, which came of lay-figures in ridiculous attitudes, huge pictures on stands, but with their backs turned to the spectator. Here a scarf hung in preconcerted folds from a sliding screen that did duty for a woman's neck and shoulders, there a cast of the Venus of Milo, everywhere arms, legs, breasts, and heads.

A favourite model of De Lannière's was a girl of eighteen,—if so one can call a huge, though highly

symmetrical sample of a woman. He would laughingly say: "Lysippus made the figure of his models thinner and the head smaller in order that they might appear tall, but I need in this case only shorten the limbs, and my figure will still be tall enough. She is a very valuable model to me as far as she goes, and you would think that was a good way, but no,—I can never see anything but her face—*elle est trop vertueuse.* She is young, therefore very coy, but that has its uses; and she is excessively self-conscious; she is constantly blushing, as if she felt that her superfluity of dress, arrange it how she will, failed to hide from me her magnificent stature." All this he would say, looking from me to her, with artistic freedom of speech; putting the poor girl all the time to the severest torture and laughing at her confusion.

I am afraid that many of the men whom I met in De Lannière's studio went there to see the model even more than the artist. They were for the most part young poets, middle-aged dramatic critics, and old *littérateurs.* De Lannière was a sonneteer and liked his own galaxy, at least that bit called the Pleiades of Poets, who shone at each other while they read their own verses, apparently to the company, but really to the model, for, when they came to the word "love," or "passion," or "despair," their eyes went to hers.

Poor girl! I felt for her: she earned her bread by letting out her face for hire, but I saw that artists and gallants were all attempting to tame her native modesty, and to deteriorate its springs.

I came across a marvellous model, the wife of an Algerian artist named Bernardon, who had been prevailed upon by his friends to pursue his calling in Paris. Her father was a Sicilian, her mother was of half Arab, half French blood. She had firm symmetrical features surcharged with dramatic electricity, and a head of hair so long that she could comb it over her into a tippet, even into a cloak, and make herself look like a Russian lady in the Arctic regions, clad in her own curly fur. When this massive hair was for ordinary use and convenience piled and packed on the top of her head, it was as prominent an object as a haystack on the field from which it had been gathered, —ample enough to be spread over that field and to cover it again. Bernardon gloried in her. He would say, "The model makes the man! Ah! if Raphael had had such a model as this, he would have been two Raphaels in one." Bernardon had been a sort of Arab explorer. He had hunted up countenances and limbs among native men and women up to the very Sahara. He had painted a chief there of such grand proportions, with his dusky skin, his large half-opened

eyes, his *vermeil* lips, and a light *burnous* hanging about him in cloud, that he looked the Twilight walking up the Desert. With his superb model, Bernardon brought with him all his reminiscences of palms, bananas, and burning suns. He despised the fair scenery round the Seine: with his wife-model at his side, he would visit Fontainebleau, St. Germain, Enghien, Versailles; it was her figure, her tropical eyes that gave them beauty. With his passion for her, he painted her by the myriad; he Fra-Angelicised paradises with her face, which, like one face seen in a cut-glass mirror, became countless and manifold,—all angel-faces.

THE BROCANTEUR.

Among the many who in their early days take up an abode in the Quartier Latin, the foreigner rather than the native looks to studying things outside as well as in the Sorbonne and the Collège de France. Such was my own lot, and I was not long in discovering that when the day's serious work was done — and the student's day there begins and ends early—there were countless objects in the streets themselves which afforded more knowledge than is to be acquired from books.

Among the quaint originals that have sprung out of the restless life of the student's quarter, none is more interesting than the *brocanteur*. Under the mask of art-connoisseur, a mask that grows to his face and becomes a second nature as he grows older, he is the students' man of business—he helps them out of temporary plights, though often into deeper ones; his is the hand that has a cunning and that helps itself; he

seems their pilot when his customers are at sea, but really he is the Charon who takes them, without their knowing it, over the river Styx.

Among the things in life that delight certain desultory minds more than others, one is to pay the shelves of a second-hand book-stall the compliment of treating them as a public library, and getting through a certain amount of such curious reading as is vainly thought inaccessible to others; or to begin an hour outside a curiosity-shop and end it inside. Both have the charm of transporting you out of yourself as it were into the secrets of the dead or the forgotten.

Not a small portion of my time was spent in hovering about these antiquarian haunts, where the dust is the dust of authors, ever present in the Rue Saint-Jacques, the Rue Soufflot, and on the quays, and issuing from many "a curious volume of forgotten lore." From the stalls along the quay, I would cross the pavement on the opposite side, greedily scan the oddities in bronze and china, the faded paintings, the soiled statues, and the coins less blurred by circulation than by having been called in by mother earth and buried by her again.

Whilst upon one of these explorations, my curiosity was whetted by a discoloured portrait of a Madonna. The face had a strangely mingled expression: it would

now seem the face of a deep and passionate nature; now it would seem as if it ought to laugh like a Bayadère. At first I thought this my own fancy; but at last I became convinced that these two expressions were present. The full ruddy lips, the large eyes that were almost a third part of the countenance and were dark, repelled the auburn hair. I almost wished that the *brocanteur* would observe me half as much as I noticed the picture; it is not well to initiate an interview of the sort, for it gives the dealer a claim on you.

If the mind is at all in an abstracted mood while the eyes rove over the contents of a broker's shop, it falls into a confused state very much resembling that which precedes a dream. This was precisely my condition. While looking at the Madonna, my eyes were insensibly attracted to a small set of fire-irons and a little old fender that was close by it; then my attention seemed extended to an almost worn-out cupid, and beyond this to a deep-blue china vase; thence to a banner-screen, while every moment the picture flashed into view again: even the thoughts that I repeated to myself seemed half muttered in a dream of romance. I was looking at the Madonna, but I was thinking of the words I had read in one of the volumes which I had just quitted on the other side

of the way, in which it was said, "Before writing romances, it is necessary to make them. We never relate well the passions of another but through the remembrance of passions that still agitate our hearts."

In a dream confusion appears quite natural, and so it does in a broker's shop.

The *brocanteur* in due time came forward, under the circumstances startling me a little; and I am sure that if I had awoke in bed and found that it was all a dream, I should not have been more surprised than when, on the *brocanteur* addressing me, I found that I was awake and in the midst of reality.

I at once mentioned the picture, which I told him had something of mystery about it in my opinion. Whether it was that my remark hit the truth or that he was in a communicative vein I cannot say; at any rate, when he took the picture down and invited me into the shop, he made a remark somewhat to this effect:

"There are two sorts of paintings, one is those which are always true pictures whether old or new, another those which are always copies, though not reproduced from others, imposing as they may appear at first sight. I'll tell you how you know one from the other—a true picture has that in it which you don't forget—but a false one you never think of again, however fine it is meant to be."

I was interested, so I remained silent.

"Now, Monsieur," continued he, "this picture has been painted from two models and, what is curious, under two sets of emotions. Anyone with a little practice can see that this heavy weight of auburn hair does not belong to the face you have here, and that the eyebrows have not the delicate arching which belong to these eyes. Then again, a liveliness has been added to this mouth which the lips will not carry off."

Here he looked very pleased and went on to say,—

"This is a real picture in spite of what I have told you, and is worth money, for it has a very curious history. I have not the least doubt that it is by Boucher, who lived in the last century, and the story about it is this. Boucher was a pet painter in his time, spoiled by the purchasers of art; the ladies of the court, the wits, they all sought him. He loved a beautiful fruiterer's girl. She used to sit to him, and he painted from her a good many angels and Madonnas. Of course she was deeply in love with him. Then came a romance and it spoiled all. It is said that during a sitting a beautiful young girl tripped in and artlessly asked Boucher if he wanted a model. He was interested and it ended in her sitting to him. The poor fruiterer's girl was set aside. Boucher did

not heed her, too much engaged with his new model, and she left. Boucher at once fell in love with the stranger, and he went on painting the picture from her which he had begun from his loving model, and this I do not doubt is the very picture. You see here two kinds of emotions, and two portraits in one. But he could not finish it: before another sitting took place, the poor fruiterer's girl had wandered about the streets for days in despair, and she fell ill and died before Boucher could obtain any tidings of her. What I have told you is a real history, and fits exactly to this portrait; though imperfect, it is worth a good deal of money to a certain class of collectors."

Having finished this statement, he said, as he passed his finger from one to another of the pictures,—

"I know Boucher's hand, though a good many copies of him have been made lately, for he has been in demand, but no copy has the same freedom of lines throughout as an original."

I felt the truth of the *brocanteur's* rough criticism, for even while not looking at it, I was still seeing the portrait which certainly had all that freedom of touch without the slightest compromise which one sees in original work. My new friend had a fine active dark eye, not much soul in it, but that eye of the quick glance and decisive aim which a money-changer has

when looking at a bank-note or a golden coin; and his straight mouth was the index of that experienced eye.

"Now here's a picture," said the *brocanteur*, "which is worth a good deal of money. It is a real painting, but it isn't a work of art."

He was showing me a landscape. It had a foreground of flowers, it had trees, it had a church, and it had a sky.

"Perhaps you will laugh," he continued, "if I tell you that this is not a landscape, but a portrait. It is a beautiful portrait of wild flowers; the rest is unwillingly put in to fill up the canvas. Did you ever see flowers painted like that: you observe there is not a single figure present, neither a man, nor a sheep, nor a cow, nor even a dog to raise it above the level of still life; in fact, as a landscape it is worthless, but these flowers, you can see they were painted while they were growing. Now about the artist. His name was Lantara. I have often thought that man must have been a droll character: he had a horror of money; he lived all his youth in the woods, and wouldn't see his fellow creatures. They say he was always talking to the flowers. But, of course, like all such, he was obliged to come to Paris at last; and then he lived in a garret and never saw a soul except

when he went to the *café* near, to get his dinner. He never paid; the *restaurateur* used to take one of his drawings instead of money. After a time he was prevailed upon to accept a thousand crowns for a picture. When he got the money, instead of being pleased, he was wretched. He couldn't sleep for the idea of his money; so in the morning, instead of putting it into a bank, he went to the *café* and treated everybody present to wine till the thousand crowns were spent. Then he was happy again. He was such a helpless creature, that if it hadn't been for a good girl named Jacqueline, who kept a shop under his lodging he would have starved. She used to share her dinner with him, and when he was working up in his garret, he would open his window to hear her singing, and fancy himself in the woods again. But then, poor girl, she died, and he was left all alone. They say he was never the same afterwards; he neglected himself, and fell ill. Then he bethought himself of the hospital. He seemed to know that he was going to die; for before he went there, he dragged his way up the banks of the Seine to take a last look at the wild flowers. Then, poor fellow, he crept to the hospital and there died. Now, you can understand that this picture is a real curiosity; in fact, it is worth money."

Léon Richeton

SOME QUARTIER-LATINISTS.

THE Hôtel de Trinidade, in the Rue Racine, is one of the many *maisons meublées* of the Quartier Latin which have long abandoned all conventional hotel administration, and have succumbed to the dictates of students and the whim of grisettes. In such *pensions* are gathered together the *jeunesse d'aujourd'hui* from every part of the Old and New World. Here you may see Nature's unfinished studies of the human form in every shade of colour, from the pale-faced *gaillard* through the various hues of the yellow Roumanian, the Greek, the Spaniard, down to the black and tanned Guadaloupian, and the soot-skinned native of Hayti. A motley company; *flâneurs*, *badauds*, all are there, extemporising a Babel where all nationalities collect together; a Bohemian Babel! Liberty, fraternity, equality have here a veritable existence; and no one who has not lived in one of these *pensions* can realise to the full the immunities which this triple-headed guardian angel confers.

The students who occupy rooms at these hotels are mainly medical and legal, though occasionally an artist is to be met with. Of the working and non-working the latter certainly predominate, for it requires nothing less than a Titanic will to withstand the riot of pleasure that here abounds. Even amongst those who leave after attaining a degree there are many who have but a smattering of their science—their time having been occupied in whirling from pleasure to pleasure, in tasting of all to the lees; returning to their homes accomplished prodigals, "pale-faced and spectre-eyed." Some even never go up for their examination, but linger on in this world of delights. Here is a desultory example, the man that may be seen at any time reading the papers and sipping absinthe at the Café de Cluny; he came to Paris some ten or twelve years ago to get through his law, which he still ostensibly pursues with his head swathed in wet linen as the examinations, which he never attends, are approaching, and at other times; for he treats his headaches and his fits of study alike—both demanding an outside water-cure. In this way he has spent ten years, and there is every prospect of his similarly passing another ten should his parents not insist on his bringing his term of probation to a close.

A day in Paris soon becomes "portion and parcel

of the dreadful past," and in the Quartier Latin especially. Having satisfied their consciences by attendance at the early morning lecture, most of the students consider the day's work done, and get rid of their overcharged vitality by devoting themselves to the pleasures of the table, of the theatre, the dancing-hall at Bullier's. Yet though reckless themselves they are not forsaken by the gods. There is, we are told,

A sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,

who occupies himself in looking after the interests of the British Tar. In like manner, our Bohemian student has his guardian angel, who, however, is like himself, of the earth, earthy. This man of providential function is rarely seen by day; but with the shades of evening he appears in the vicinity of the wine-shops. He is the drunkard's pilot-star, and lives upon the intermittent traffic of the night. When at the stroke of twelve the *cabarets* disgorge themselves, this philanthropist lends a ready hand to their unsteady *habitués*, and leads them gently home. The Salon de l'Absinthe, famous for its accomplished tipplers, is watched over by one of these eccentric persons, who is unceasingly employed in this way throughout the long hours of the night.

The *table d'hôte* of the Hôtel de Trinidade not only offers an excellent opportunity for the study of anthropology, but has besides the inestimable advantage of never being dull. Nothing aids digestion more than diversion during meals. One has only to dine on the boulevards with a bevy of English tourists to realise the full contrast to this. There they sit, stiff and constrained, silent, as if waiting to be shaved, and casting now and then a furtive glance around like a barber's customers fearing the flourished razor! No wonder that we English have an European reputation for silence, though it is more in public that we indulge in mute enjoyment than in private.

Now at the Hôtel de Trinidade silence is unknown during dinner. They there generally muster about sixty, including ladies who are the life and soul of the party. Mdlle. Cécile, mischievous and full of fun, has always an inexhaustible fund of gossip wherewith to amuse; and Mdlle. Julie runs her pretty close, and might even rival her were it not for the fact that she is but an *ouvrière* at a *magasin de nouveautés*, whilst Mdlle. Cécile is worshipped at a *brasserie* in the Rue de l'École de Médecine. And yet republican principles are everywhere professed! Mdlle. Cécile is rather pale, with waving brown hair and laughing eyes, and sweet plaintive voice. Her tastes, which may be

summed up in a few words, are those of all her class. An exceeding passion for Bullier's, especially on *bal masqué* nights, when she loves to go in *débardeur* costume, or, still better, *en page;* an evening at the Théâtre Montparnasse, where, during four mortal hours, her little heart will palpitate for the griefs and dangers of the heroes and heroines of the last boulevard drama; and, lastly, a novel by Paul de Kock but above all things she loves the *romans tristes.*

If you would win this young heart, you must bombard it with *marrons glacés.* She is a type of the true grisette, very different from the idealised form we meet with in the songs of Béranger, in the pages of Murger and De Musset; very different, too, from the creature that our insular virtue conjures up to frown at. She has her faults, of course; she is wayward, whimsical, capricious. But if only her Jules be with her, she is a model of contentment, and her happiness would be complete if the quick succession of her joys were not now and then checked by the thought, "Un jour viendra qu' il ne m'aimera plus;" but it only saddens her for a moment. What has been said of her by one who knew her well is terse and true:— "Elle ne tient au vice que par un rayon, et s'en éloigne par les mille autres points de la circonférence sociale."

There are two regular visitors to this *table d'hôte*, who afford much amusement to the company present. One is a Guadaloupian; the other a Haytian, before whose dusky countenance, it may be said, all others pale. Nature in the Guadaloupian has given us a deep-toned study in chalks; in the Haytian a monotone in sepia. The Guadaloupian has a coarse, irregular face and fiery eyes, and a mouth well garrisoned with teeth, now on guard, now moving in the most perfect order in single file. Both his mouth and chin are very large, and when he is under the least excitement they make such a circuit under his nose as to suggest permanent dislocation. Much of his natural colour has been worn away by western dissipation, so that sometimes, and especially when lit up by the fierce light of tropical vivacity, his face is piebald.

The Haytian, whose complexion is of a brownish-black, has features which have been chiselled on a large scale, and are well thrown up by a plentiful expanse of snow-white collar and shirt. His undeviating dignity of manner sits strangely on his complexion, and in this respect he offers a striking contrast to the boisterous Guadaloupian. Once seated and "posed" he is motionless. Be sure that his food has to go all the way to his mouth—there is none of that undignified

European meet-you-half-way compromise with his knife and fork while he eats! All gesture, all expression he leaves to his eyes. He seldom smiles, except perhaps when the Guadaloupian attacks him with chaff, calling him *son excellence*, then conscious not of compliment, but of appreciation, his mouth relaxes, and he almost bows.

There are a number of Cubans generally at table, a noisy crew, whose continual chatter tends very much to interfere with general conversation. They never speak French, but herding together at one end of the table, keep up a rapid cross-fire of fierce argumentation in inferior Spanish. The amount of gesticulation employed for the elucidation of the subjects discussed becomes sometimes alarming; every object at hand is seized upon to aid in demonstrating the meaning of these disputants. Knives become lancets; plates are flourished in mid-air; and cruet-stands undergo new and serious dangers. Were it not for the conduct of the Guadaloupian, who, in his absurd vanity, supposes himself to be the object of their conversation, these Cubans would be insupportable. The former darts sinister lightnings from his rolling eyes; he champs his ponderous jaw; but failing thereby to gain any attention, or lessen the jabber of his fancied depreciators, he snatches up

l'Ordre and begins reading with incredible energy. But repose is foreign to his nature. In a very short time he will start an Imperialist opinion, whereupon some fiery Republican opposite will wither the Empire with his invectives. Then the Guadaloupian exults; his lips compressed, the darkness of his face almost reaches twilight under his triumphant smile; leaning sideways in the direction of his yellow enemies, the Cubans, he lifts up his long roll of bread, and then, after a preliminary flourish about his head, brings it down with the force of a sledge-hammer as he shouts "Vive l'Empire," and breaks into so boisterous a laugh that the company, Bohemian to the core, is yet forced into sudden silence, amazed at such an outburst. I need hardly say he is no favourite, with the ladies especially; and when he rises to depart there is a general feeling of relief. He is ceremonious and ludicrous to the last, offering his hand to all who will take it, and bowing with great *empressement* to the ladies, who hardly ever acknowledge the compliment.

These South Americans generally receive large remittances from home, and indulge much in jewels; the Europeans are less rich but more philosophic. The medical and law students especially, as the month draws to its close, and remittances have been

consumed in tobacco and absinthe, enliven the streets with their defiant songs. They form themselves into bands of eight or ten, and bawl with full lung-power as they move along. They are frequently to be met in the Rue Monsieur le Prince and the Rue Soufflot, with their great broad-brimmed somberos and brigand-looking cloaks, some *jödeling*, some with the rattles and tin-trumpets of the last *réveillon*, treating the neighbourhood to a wild impromptu concert. The first idea is that they are revenging themselves upon some tradesman diffident of running accounts, but on inquiry you find that the motive that urges these gentlemen to a harmonious expression of their feelings is nothing more than the inharmonious condition of things.

Although these Quartier-Latinists afford examples of a numerous class, it is not to be supposed that there are not many students of the university less demonstrative in their manners, who burn the midnight lamp. Of these you hear but little except at the examinations.

Further, there is a worldly-wise class among the native students who live in commodious apartments, and pursue their studies with zeal during the morning hours, their rooms not only well-stocked with books, but filled with ancient furniture, shields, spears—even

coats of mail and mediæval ornaments deemed necessary by them to give expression to their tastes and to assert their position. If the student of this class is medical, it is announced by a skull on the mantel-piece or table, the conventional symbol of the healing art. The man whom you may see in silken dressing-gown, seated in a Havanna atmosphere among these incitements to study up to one o'clock, you will meet on the Boulevards later in the day dressed in the latest fashion, or riding in the Bois de Boulogne, full of that leisure which denies the existence of a single care in life; or if you frequent the *salons* of Saint-Germain, you will come across him there, where people, judging of him by outward appearance, will inform you that he never opens a book.

Leon Richeton

DEATH "EN GRAND CHIC."

MEN of strong powers carry with them an impulse to impress their character on their age, and men of a nature similar to theirs with less strong powers and less impulse are their recipients. It is not of the least importance what that character is: it may be such as Mirabeau's, lofty and patriotic; or it may be such as Alfred De Musset's, vacillating, dissipated, and vain;—whatever the character of such men, it must be impressed or they cannot live and be happy. The easy multitude is of course the impressed party, especially as De Musset-ites, and they industriously carry out their projects of self-ruin in temples dedicated to him they worship, that is to say in such places as the Café des Martyrs, the Salon de l'Absinthe, L'Académie, or the Café Procope.

All these are deadly resorts,—still they are the haunts of ambition. They are frequented by some men who, if they had retained in their souls the pur-

pose with which they started, might have become the pride of the sober circles, perhaps of the country, but who not reaping fame in a single harvest draw on their future. In this downward course they sink into Bohemians, and applaud Henri Mürger who founded the sect, though he plainly told them that he was only establishing a malady of which men die. But they adhere to the lot into which their tarnished and diminished lives have dropped; and, now that they have become philosophers, the Café des Martyrs is their pet grove. A charming resort where, in flashing wit from hour to hour, they daily waste their clock-ful of time; or, if they shew energy, it is in striving at intervals to set all France in a blaze as occasion may require. Philosophy is their mainstay; it tells them that the fate of genius is obscurity, and that all who grovel in that darkness should despise posterity, and mockingly revenge themselves upon it by quaffing absinthe to its health.

The Café des Martyrs is one of the pet pleasure-places of Paris frequented by abandoned talent. The "fraternised" go there like summer-flies that seem only to know their danger by fits and starts, yet still daily seek its poison-chambers to be sooner or later entrapped, and to add their number to the spectacle of the slowly-dying.

It is easier for a man to acclimatise himself at the equator than to become proof against that noxious alcoholic liquor so playfully called *la verte*. It begins by elevating the novice as in a lift; but he soon finds himself sinking again to the bottom, and every day landing below the level at which he started. At the end of this little up and down journey, during which he has not moved a limb, he finds himself tired to death, shattered, often somewhat comatose. He has put himself through this drugging in order to take refuge from himself, but now he stares about him with a bewildered look and wonders where he is, indeed, feels anxious to get into his own company again. Perhaps some great disappointment in life has led to his adopting this anodyne course of self-treatment; but now, how thankful would he be to get his health, disappointment and all, back again.

In the Café des Martyrs life rarely begins till after midday, and then it is but an overture to the evening revels. As the afternoon advances a few *viveurs* drop in arm-in-arm to take a *petit verre*; but it is only when the twilight of the place is gone and the fair waitresses in Swiss attire move daintily from one saloon to the other under a nebulous blaze of light that the saturnalia sets in.

At the Café des Martyrs, where the measure of the

man is taken according to the depth of his draughts and the length of his bouts, and where capacity for debauch is a patent of nobility among these crapulous carpet-knights, a beautiful youth of very high fashion might be seen lounging on the red cushions before the tell-tale mirrors. At this time you might have seen in him the health and triumph of his party, though he surpassed all others as a non-abstainer, and was soon to become their café-king. He led the orgies as a beauty leads the dance, and was an authority on all matters of toping and betting etiquette.

There is a legendary mill that grinds old people into young, but *tout cela change*; the latest improvement is in the opposite direction and grinds the young into old. The proud and showy Prince of these *absintheurs*—the café-king—was in a hurry to die illustrious; he mistook his own head for Apollo's immortal one; he mistook his stomach for a digester that never fails; he deemed his lungs deathless enough to breathe all the air between him and the sun; and it was in this creed that he entered on his glorious absinthian career. But before long the bloom of his cheek became limited to one hectic spot; the light of his eyes became phosphorescent, one began to see the bony sockets through their sunken orbits; the lips were parched up. But he had spirit still, and could

feign the lively mood in the midst of the secret company of devils blue that filled his soul, pricked his conscience with their pins and needles, and oftentimes amused themselves by getting lower and turning his stomach upside down.

On one of those bright mornings of summer in which the young often feel that a happy life has truly begun, this Prince of *absintheurs* woke up from very troubled dreams, and was grateful once more to find himself in the real world—a world which he was to quit before the sun which shone in through his window should reach its setting. He woke to know that he must soon quaff that deep draught of sleep which would hold him in repose through eternity. Nevertheless the little remnant of life that was in him was courageous, and he resolved to do what he liked with his few hours, and to die *en grand chic*.

He did not want breakfast that day; there was not time to digest it. So he took his amplest dram, and having thus put together the scattered embers of what fire he had left within him, he ordered his valet to dress him with elaborate art. So weak was he, so often did he jocosely say that he was tired and must rest a few moments, that his toilet occupied some three hours of that sunshiny enduring afternoon. At length he was ready, and by the aid of his last dram

but one, he got from his apartment to his carriage and drove to the Café des Martyrs. Some of his friends were already assembled. He saw them through the open portal, sighed deeply, took his last dram, and with a step almost gay, descended while he muttered to himself, "This is better than to die in bed." He was soon on his velvet cushion among his companions in death, but he kept his eyes from the mirrors with the whispered thought, "I don't want to see myself die." His last dram was beginning to work, there was a little flame flickering in his soul. "I hope," said he to his friends with unparalleled bravado, "that this weather will last. What do you say to a day at Saint-Cloud among the fountains, it would be so refreshing, and then ——"

He did not finish the sentence. His eyes fell on the mirrors as he sank back and died *en grand chic.*

Léon Richeton 1877

CHEVALIERS D'INDUSTRIE.

I WAS indebted to a friend named Goday for much assistance when I first entered on the study of Paris life, and would here make a passing remark or two on his extraordinary powers, both of searching into the secrets of this social organisation, and of acquiring knowledge in situations where nothing really appears hidden.

He is himself of a type well known to the world, to whom some mystery attaches: there are men who pretend to know all about his antecedents and surroundings, but no two agree; some give him a Spanish princess for a mother; some say he is a scion of royalty. Wherever the truth lies, no greater connoisseur exists, whether in knowledge of ancient pictures, of which he has purchased not a few collections for our nobility; or in his acquaintance with rare works in every language: he is both a linguist and a scholar.

I was with him one day in the Café de Suède

which we often visited together. There we sat under the awning among the usual gathering of *hommes de plume* and *hommes de sabre*, sipping like the rest our vermouth and blowing our cigarettes, while the great tide of humanity flowed by. Here we chat by the hour together on that most romantic of all romantic subjects—Paris life.

"Do you see," said he, "the man under the lamp with the cadaverous face, and long black moustaches that climb up his cheeks like young cobras to whisper at his ear? It is Mandana."

"Really?" said I.

"Not too loud," said he, "he's got three ears—one is a fox's which he's now pricking."

The next moment this noted character raised a double eye-glass and looked towards us superciliously. He was well dressed, with a fine figure.

"Mandana," said my friend, *sotto voce* and laughing, "belongs to the Grand Order of *Chevaliers d'Industrie*. He installed himself at an early age, and may almost be called a Knight Commander. He is all prosperity now, and plays his game in high circles, but I can remember when he lived on one-sou rolls that he carried in his pocket and ate in private. What is singular, he dressed as well then as he does now. His rooms in the Chaussée

d'Antin are simply splendid. His expenditure surpasses belief."

"And where," I asked, "does he draw the funds from?"

"From the Quartier Saint-Germain, to be sure. But he would tell you that he is a *littérateur:* and so he is in one sense; he lives by writing."

"Perhaps an *écrivain public* who writes his own begging letters," I said.

"*Begging* letters," said my friend, laughing. "He never went so low as that. There's not a man who has a tithe of his information about the secret springs of society; he has a key that will pick the lock of any skeleton-closet in Paris. Such was the precocity of his genius, that he actually, when a mere *gamin*, wrote a threatening letter, with a demand for money, to Madame ——, a court favourite, whom he had watched into a *mauvais endroit*, and was incarcerated for his pains among a gang of the fraternity to which he now does so much honour, and at their hands learnt his first lesson in letter-writing as a fine art, which he has since reduced to a science. As he matured, the field of his operations widened. He corresponded for some time with all classes of the weak-minded and vulnerable with more or less success, when his shrewd genius hit upon a tremendous discovery. *He found that he*

invariably succeeded in extracting money, often large sums, from convalescents. From that time he devoted the whole force of his mind to this never-failing resource. His new victims, in their weak condition, are more susceptible than the strong, and are proportionately in dread of having their secrets exposed. He cultivates the acquaintance of every medical man of note, as well as of nurses and gossips, entertaining the former with his usual splendour, patronising and bribing the latter. From them he extracts information, and keeps a regular sick-list of the wealthy convalescents, especially women—a list longer and more *distinguée* than that of the most fashionable physician. Give him a name, and he will soon find the means of attaching to it a history, which at once becomes the ground-work of a menacing letter. The small fry of his order he employs as messengers 'to do his errands in the gloomy deep.' The influence of the fellow among the members of his Order is surprising, but he subscribes largely towards the support of Monsieur le Prince."

"Who in the name of royalty is that?" I asked.

"I must tell you," said my companion, "that the Order has always a man of the highest style, and sufficiently unknown, residing in one of the first hotels in Paris, and frequenting the best society. The functions

of this official are those of the most rigid respectability. Mandana himself has passed through the office, but of course he disgraced it. Well, Monsieur le Prince is the general referee of the Order—every swindling Pole, every Greek scoundrel who comes to Paris to give lessons in his native language, or to float bubble companies, on contributing to Monsieur le Prince's Peter's pence, is entitled to his testimony as to moral character, integrity, and pecuniary *status*. Among the numerous secret societies of the continent, that of the Order of the *Chevaliers d'Industrie* is of no mean importance. It ramifies through all the capitals of Europe. The way in which these knights-errant grapple with their destiny—how it verifies that fine axiom of your Shakespeare : 'In the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men.'"

"Mandana," said I, "it sounds Spanish."

"No," said he, "his mother was a Roumanian girl, his reputed father was a Hungarian merchant, who started his son in life, had him educated in Paris, and later on placed him in one of his firms here. The lad soon made himself the favourite of his fellow clerks, and after a year or two in the *bureau*, he was living grandly upon his salary of 3000 francs a year. All were much impressed by his lordly ways. He made friends wherever he went by the charm of his

manner and his liberal entertainments. Suddenly there came a crash. He had been playing fast and loose with cash-box and ledger. To account for his expenditure he often exhibited registered letters to his friends, who were astonished when it was discovered that these had been addressed to him by his own hand as a means of hood-winking his more inquiring acquaintance. Notwithstanding the amazement which followed on the *exposé*, few could resist the fascinating attitude, when, in lilac kid gloves, and elegantly dressed, he called on them to take his leave as if nothing had happened.

Since this vagary he has passed through many like experiences, and has been half over the continent, always assuming the title of count on his travels. I have met him in all kinds of places and got him out of all sorts of scrapes. You will wonder why I have troubled myself to do so. The reason is simply that his father is one of my earliest friends, and entrusts me with funds, unknown to Mandana himself, to relieve him in moments of difficulty. He never bows to me without my permission. Would you like to know him for the nonce? He's very amusing."

But as my friend said this, Mandana flung down a napoleon, took up his change, and left the *café*.

"Ah! never mind," said Goday; "another time."

I saw Mandana a second time, at his trial. His enemies were too strong for him; his correspondence by degrees accumulated in the central bureau of the police, and when at last one letter more damning than all the rest came to hand, he was arrested, tried, and condemned. That letter was written to a dying nun, and was never opened by her. Mandana is now paying the penalty of this last venture of his at Cayenne, where he is to remain for life, that is to say for fourteen years, which is two lives in that land of miasma.

There are many heroes, counts by instinct, like Mandana, with sentiments bland, and with deeds as artfully packed as the portmanteau of a private smuggler. It really demands a mistrustful character to see into them; at least until suffering from them personally, and so acquiring that happy bias which seems so necessary to the formation of a sound judgment.

There is something in asserting the rights of minorities, especially of the minority of one;—in refusing your respect for laws which you have had no hand in making. This something has a strong significance with these *Chevaliers d'Industrie*; they are independent first, wealthy or knocked over by reverses afterwards; as it happens. They jostle politely against

the world, they war against intimates—as high-minded M.P.s do; carry off light-weighted plunder; and, as offering facilities, generally commence with an unexpected raid upon their kith and kin. They are distinguished by a good working alloy of confidence and cowardice which leads them into and out of the most tortuous scrapes. There are men among them endowed with a devilry beyond belief, but who under danger exhibit a poltroonery which is in a way creditable to tactics such as theirs. Thus, in many points, to state what they are is to state what they are not, and in all their doings they must be ranked among nature's striking anomalies.

The sympathies of these men draw them to the centres of civilisation, that is of Europe, where the rude cannibalism of mankind has been supplanted by refined arts of prey which are better suited to tempered human tastes in matters of flesh and blood. It is certainly more graceful to wheedle another out of his money than his life—for the latter once taken, no promissory note can compensate! It is more civilised to cheat than to rob outright; it is respectful to tell lies in virtuous phraseology: it shows the appreciative character, and has a flavour of higher things; so are these *Chevaliers d'Industrie* drawn by cultivated sympathy to our great cities

Not but that the New World has a charm for them; they are fond of travel; fond of change,—when it was the fashion to visit the sacred places, they were to be met in Palestine, and have been known to endow with new experiences the great markets of the East. So they are often on the wing: there will be locusts where there is sunny society, and these will visit the oases of domestic life with their depredations. And what spots are so domestic as London, Paris, Vienna? There is more love in Piccadilly than in a whole Riding of Yorkshire! And since it is strictly true that where poverty comes in at the door love flies out of the window, you may be sure there is more domestic bliss in a single Lombard Street house than in all the Seven Dials, for in it the windows are barred and nothing can fly out, but in them the windows are all broken for the more free egress of love. And thus it is the *Chevalier d'Industrie* frequents the grand neighbourhoods where love abounds and shuns the haunts of the poor where it is unknown.

Yet, strange to say, I have heard that these knights of the facile tongue and canny leer reach worse haunts than where the Seven Dials are time-servers. Listen to the personal narrative of M. Pierre Valois, a mere stripling in his art, who has done nothing yet, except on a contemptibly small scale, but has all the business

talent necessary to success, and has only to bide his time: besides, he is humorous, and the worse things are, the more comic do they appear to him while he narrates them. He chaffs adversity, and, at least once, as he says, has put starvation out of countenance. It was the other day at Auteuil that this popular youth was leaning against the barrier as the jockeys rode past before the start. After some glances of approval, he entered into conversation with his next-hand neighbour, a highly respectable party, as could be seen by his shiny hat, his glazed collar, his glossy coat, and his bright boots. This neighbour, evidently fearful of the subject of sport and its dire consequences, solemnly let drop, as if to avert a bet, that the end of all book-making was the Morgue, that he had been a witness of it this very day.

"Ah!" said the Chevalier, looking out from under his shaggy eyebrows, "any good specimens?"

His neighbour made answer that there was only one body there.

"Oh! of course, they were at *déjeuner*," was the extraordinary reply.

"Who?" gaped the stranger.

"Why, the bodies, of course. I was one myself once;" and the Chevalier, seeing that his new ac-

quaintance was interested, grew familiar, as was usual with him.

"Mon cher," he said, fondling the stranger's arm, and speaking in a confidential tone, "there was a time when I was very hard up."

This the stranger seemed quite ready to believe.

"There was a time when I hadn't a sou. I had sold all I possessed. My watch had long been at the Mont-de-Piété, and its ticket sold. Starvation stared me in the face, when, suddenly, whether suggested by the nearness of death, or not, I cannot say, but I bethought me of the Morgue. I went there at once, and fortunately found a vacancy. I remained for ten days, at a franc a day,—board wages. The duties were easy enough, but rather monotonous; and that perpetual jet of water dripping upon your nose as you lie upon the cold marble is very irritating: it gave me a violent cold, such a one, indeed, as lost me my situation, for being seized with a fit of sneezing, just as the place was full of people, the inspector got into a great rage. 'Ote-toi de là,' he cried, and kicked me out. I have never been near the hole since."

"Stranger," said the other, "I like you; I never heard one of my own country tell a better story than that at a minute's notice, for you had not more time than that for the invention of the same. I like you,

will you liquor? Then come along, for I should like to hear the twin of that story, yes, I should, I say; come along and liquor."

Among those chevaliers who have recently chosen Paris as their arena, the one who made most stir in fashionable and other circles, was Stanislas Potoki, or, as his familiars used to call him, the Savant. The cause of his success was this: on being asked if he was a descendant of the famous countess whose name he had accidentally assumed without ever having heard of her, he answered "yes," and was pitied from that hour. He learnt, on referring to his own name, that the beautiful Countess who bore it before him, was of Eastern origin, and he henceforth pretended to a knowledge of Asian languages, which he believed were unknown in France. Many who were no judges had faith in him, and one among the number introduced him to a well-known scholar and oriental. This was unfortunate for Potoki, who did not know his man, but described himself as learned in the languages of Asia, and as the friend of Schlagenweid and Vasilieff. There was a slip of paper on the table that puzzled the scholar. "Could he read Arabic?" "Certainly. Ah! this is a passage from Genesis." The scholar laughed in his sleeve. The slip of paper had upon it the name and address of an Arab who had a moment

before quitted the house. The professor thanked him but did not encourage him to renew the visit.

When people saw Potoki in his fine Russian fur and yellow jewellery, which so well became his tall sad figure, they believed in him still in spite of the professor, whom they thought to be jealous of his profounder knowledge, especially on Potoki intimating in a whisper that the dear professor could not pronounce.

La vie du savant est bien triste was his pet utterance. About six months after his arrival he fully established his reputation as a scholar by reading a lecture on the Book of Daniel to the Belgian Club. A week before he had transcribed it from a German essay on the subject that he had found in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In the circles in which he moved, and to which he gained access by representing himself as the intimate of some notability out of reach—now of the Circassian leader Schamyl, now of Prince Gortschakoff—he managed his matters very well, but always conscious of his limited knowledge, he was never observed to talk long with anyone who really knew more than himself. To the veriest tyro in Paris drama he would talk of his play that was coming out at the Porte Saint-Martin; with those who had not a notion what a philosopher was, but had an obscure glimmering that the word meant a radical prophet who foretold events

out of his own head, he would descant on his work, fast emerging from the press, "On the more obscure epochs of Greek philosophy;" all this chiefly at the *soirées* of a certain authoress who was more ignorant than himself, but who had a wonderful knack of telling a tale and weaving into it the secret emotions which differentiate women from men, and which the modester of the sex consider private and pretend not to know.

He loved his roll of MS., which he always wore under his arm, with an Arabic character sticking out here, a Coptic there; and here and there an hieroglyphic, perhaps a scarabæus or a phœnix. When over-questioned, he was absent-minded, but his fine lost expression was of a kind to warn the beholder never to interrupt the reveries of the great. Perhaps his art was shown in nothing more strikingly than in his care to live in circles unconnected with each other by social or other ties, so that when he dropped out of one, he was on his legs in another. Of course wherever he moved he was hunted down as an impostor in due time, nevertheless he often obtained large sums of money and spent them generously chiefly among those who were beginning to question his authenticity—this profusion equally well directed would enable him to borrow in time of need.

The truth really is that he had high aspirations, fine

diplomacy, vast skill in so constructing a lie that it appeared the real truth told in confidence. He was a Gortschakoff born under the wrong planet, a Czar doomed to the career of a convict. Such things as he said and did during his two years' sojourn in Paris would have made a romance of *the great man in a little place.* His career there was a series of adventures unsurpassed in coolness, mendacity and daring even by those of Reinecke Fuchs, Schneider Fixlein, Robert Macaire. A great adept, now in the cream, now in the skimmed milk, now in the sour curds of society, now in the ditch, now on the hedge seated among honey-suckles and wild-roses, now sitting desolate on a gate looking at the sunset and muttering an evening prayer for to-morrow's success.

Wonderful Potoki—he had a grand scheme at last, but it was so thwarted, and he was so deceived by a friend, that he might have well exclaimed: "an enemy has done this." This last scheme was very fine. He had become the leading spirit of a gang of young debauchées of wealth, and of taste for the living arts—that is, women; he saw his way to persuading these *blasés* youths that his friend Schamyl wanted to raise à loan at unlimited interest *cum privilegio.* What was it about? Why, Schamyl held an estate in the Cau-

casus, on which he cultivated a girl-farm for supplying the Stamboul market. The girls were forced after the same manner as fruits and flowers: they were kept in rose-groves during the budding season, and allowed to do no other work than gather the blossoms for the making of attar, while they breathed nothing but perfume. The profits were enormous. Besides, the holder of a 10,000 francs share had the choice of taking his dividend in money or in kind.

The scheme was to be kept quite private. It took enormously; six or seven shares were about to be taken up, when behold a *confrère*, whom Potoki had treated scurvily, got wind of the plot, and proposed to take a quiet revenge, which he did by a paragraph in the ———, to the effect that Schamyl was in Paris on urgent private affairs. Poor Potoki thought himself a sick man, so was disposed to travel for his health. He received an opportune visit from the malicious *confrère*, who was determined to complete his revenge in an overt act of kindness. "If you should ever visit London," he said, "I will give you a letter to Lord Russell, in whose family I was tutor." This decided Potoki, who crossed the Channel forthwith; but there was no Lord Russell in London answering to the description; there was only one, who seemed inclined to have nothing whatever to say to poor Potoki.

A minor episode occurred in the life of Potoki during his residence in Paris which should be mentioned as giving an emotional current to his short career in that capital. He became very much attached to a young person, whose admiration for him was simple, though genuine, and he became allied to her by certain ties which were almost binding; in fact, he shared with her his well-furnished apartments, and, within a limited circle, extended to her the use of his name. She felt very safe, the more so as he frequently brought her presents of substantial, often brilliant jewelry. His handsome face was her delight, and being of a confiding disposition, she had no occasion to look forward to anything, her present happiness filling up the measure of her entire life.

While engaged in floating his Caucasus with the Schamyl farm upon it, and enrolling subscribers' names, his prospects appeared to him as fine as the view itself from the top of that lofty mountain: these were to be suddenly obscured.

It was a trying moment to Potoki. He could no longer afford a partner in life; indeed, he had no other resources to meet the expenses of a new career abroad than to take his darling's jewels with him, while he left her behind; but what greatly aggravated the situation was the necessity he felt of deserting her

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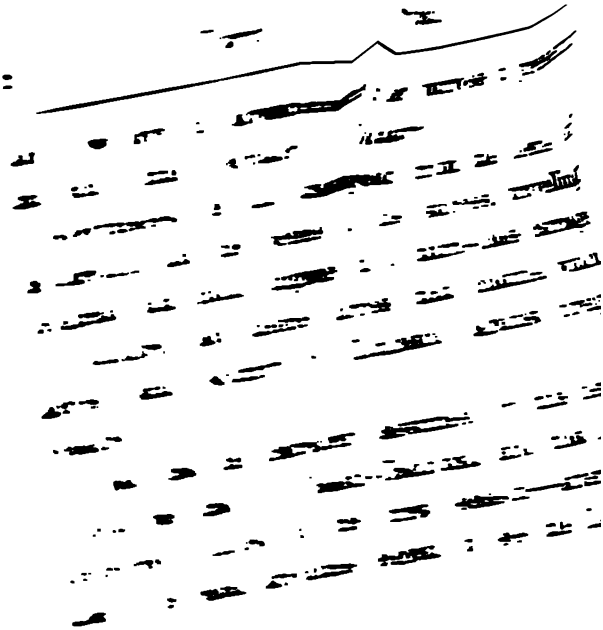


(12) ISAAC MARCHAND D'HABITS (12)

Léon Richeton fecit

MARCHANDES D'HABITS.

During one of my visits to Paris I engaged a charming suite of apartments of a Madame L'Estrange, in a cool, breezy street between the Church of the Trinity and the Boulevard des Capucines. The rooms adjoined a second suite occupied by the lady herself, of whom I had engaged them; a person of countless attractions.

Among the many women we meet there are some who interest us from the very first, various as may be the feelings which arise under their magnetic influence. Some cause in us a pleasant upheaval of the tender passion; others hold us fast in admiration only. Madame L'Estrange at once attracted me; the harmonious movements of her fine figure, that sort of music-taught gracefulness which she had at her command—was it this that filled my imagination? If so, whatever rapture she caused me was damped by the self-obtruding question, who and what can she

be? She was very handsome; she had a flexible figure; added to this she had all that taste in dress which, common as it is, never ceases to be remarkable in the Parisian. To follow the fashion seemed to be her hobby; but the extent to which she indulged in it, considering her position, was a perfect riddle.

Her cast of features, and other circumstances which will appear hereafter, gave me the impression that she might be of Jewish blood. Her blue-black hair; her large dark eyes, neither languid nor languishing, but full of purpose; the shape of her nose; her full and close-fitting lips, all favoured such an inference, contradicted as it might be by a truly French air and accent. Though young, her sallow complexion was lightly rouged, and in the evening, even powdered. She bore dress well, and responded, with her personal graces, to all its suggestiveness. She left home in a hired fiacre at an early hour every day except Saturdays and Sundays. Splendid as was her attire in the evening, when she received much company (and I was myself frequently one of her guests) her morning dress was of the simplest description, except that she would invest her figure in a rich shawl, sometimes of lace, sometimes of cashmere, so that when seated in a carriage she appeared to be dressed in the fullest

fashion. She had a voice full of soft persuasive tones that admirably attuned itself to the humour of her hearers. She was accustomed to receive many lady visitors, especially between her return home and dinner-time.

No gentleman entered the house, except at the soirées, though many showered cards upon the bewitching hostess. I saw that some feigned love for her; the style of all these pretenders was more or less defective, and this helped to preserve me intact, for one cannot compete for a moment with men of questionable pretensions, and such, I observed, these were: in fact, one would have a wine-spot on his waistcoat, another a worn-out button-hole on his shirt. These circumstances, together with my unsatisfied curiosity to know who she was, and what she was, kept the feelings which would spring up in spite of me, in a cool breeze. She was Madame L'Estrange, that was all I knew about her; but she neither exhibited a husband, nor made any mention of one; so I pictured to myself some quiet man who never came in and who never went out. Not knowing of his existence, I could not ask who he was; much less could I put such a question to anybody as, "Who is my landlady?" So I continued in my puzzled state of ignorant curiosity.

One day I was lounging beside my reading desk, with the windows wide open, when I heard what is rarely met with in this quarter,—a full outburst in the jargon of the Halles Centrales. I thought at first it was in the street below, but it grew so loud and was so near that I dismissed the notion. The voice then seemed to come from my balcony. I listened doubtingly; yes, it was true *argot;* then I knew the voice; a feeling of inquisitive wonder seized me. I rose and stepped on the verandah. The voice clearly came from the next apartment: it was Madame L'Estrange's; she was rating her maid on the subject of her wardrobe. It was real anger, and real *argot.* She was not an actress? What could it all mean?

Weeks passed away, which, though bearing with them new and strange farragos of adventure, had not obliterated the curiosity which this reminiscence had aroused, when my friend Goday called on me, and I told him all about my mysterious *patronne,* whom he had more than once questioned me about on coming to the house.

"*Soyez tranquille, mon cher,*" he said, "we'll clear it up. What do you say to an outing? I have been boxed up in the Bibliothèque Nationale all the week, and want a stroll. Let us take the quarter of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, or the Temple."

"I know them well," I said, "but shall know them better after a visit with you."

So we started for those parts, taking on our way the streets around Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Goday remarking that there was much in the neighbourhood in keeping with the great clothes-mart we were about to explore, and a more remarkable museum of wardrobes, it is not easy to find.

From the nature of this quarter, the business of the *marchandes d'habits* is exceptional; the people there reap a golden harvest without waiting long, preying, as they do, upon those who one day go clothed in purple and fine linen, the next in the meanest rags. Yet while these female merchants purchase the most splendid costumes at almost nominal prices, they are not indifferent to the gleanings of other fields open to them; the *métier* of money-lending is common among them, and they practise its worst tricks upon their needy customers; many, too, act for these as go-betweens in matters of the heart—for in waiting on them, they are often entrusted with *billets-doux* by the married ladies of Saint-Germain to their lovers, and do not fail to take advantage of these confidences by depreciating the wardrobes they buy of them, and by enhancing the rate of interest on moneys they lend them.

The passer-by might not give much of his attention

to the magazines of second-hand clothes which are so numerous here, and certainly as compared with the Temple they are but as shops compared with markets. Yet the treasures of velvets, laces, silks and satins which they contain, stored away in upper chambers, are of incredible worth, and but slightly indicated by the few tawdry things that hang at the doors to attract the eyes of the vulgar.

We now reached the quarter which was the principal object of our stroll—that of the Temple. As if time had gradually changed it into a symbol of the purpose to which it is now devoted, it has that worn-out, second-hand aspect which so well accords with the trade here carried on. Here that historical Temple once stood, which by turns was a prison-house of royalty and a sanctuary of bankrupts, and is now converted into an enormous clothes-mart. It is a gloomy and desolate structure; there is something almost touching in the sight of these cast-off habiliments, so ostentatiously displayed in this gigantic building, which have already performed their part in so many scenes of life. Here is a world of garments—what thoughts of dead scenes it brings up, while these *habits d'occasion* look as if they had survived their wearers!

We walked through this avenue of cast-off cere-

ments as through a vast green-room from which the illusion had fled and the actors had gone. The comparative smallness of the *baraques*, or stalls, the magnitude of the Temple itself, which has an air of melancholy co-extensive with its length and breadth, the vacant spaces, the high rafters above, and the glazed roof, almost give the scene the appearance of a market held out of doors. Yet among these dead clothes, a series of life-dramas is passing; the open windows of the *baraques* are curtained with many-coloured apparel; between these hangings stands the *marchande* on the keen look-out for customers, and when engaged with one inside it is often amusing to stand by and listen to the chaffering that goes on between her and some pretty young purchaser, who with slender means is primed with an inordinate desire to smarten herself for some coming ball or *fête*. The variety of things exhibited at the stalls is amazing. Here among velvets and silks we saw a rich satin dress with a claret-stain splashed down it, widening as it descended as if the glass had left its magnified image upside down upon its folds; bonnets abandoned by coquettes, yet full of coquetry; *jupons* whose pink linings had the grey creases of age upon them; *robes de chambre* that had the *négligé* air of languor in their faded beauty.

As we advanced, ten or a dozen saleswomen flocked round us, suggesting unprecedented bargains; one had *un beau gilet*, another *une jolie redingote*, another *un pantalon gris*. Each had something ready to hand. If we had listened to the words of these harpies we should in less than a twinkling have laid in a wardrobe fit for a Merry-Andrew. They followed us up for some paces, varying their coaxing refrains; but finding us inexorable, they by degrees fell back to their doorways. As we proceeded, others came trooping after us, their zeal rather whetted by the failure of their rivals; and in like fashion, still further up the long aisle, new forms seemed to receive an impetus to their zeal from the non-success of their neighbours, and these escorted us till we were met by fresh invaders, who in turn dissolved away. It is wonderful how little these people try to penetrate into what is passing in the minds of strangers, or to fathom their wants; they press upon you the most unsuitable apparel, just as a shoe-black will offer to clean your new patent-leather boots. When they fail to secure a customer they show no disappointment—jabbering to each other on their way back in their jargon, or as it is called, their *catéchisme poissard*.

Not until we had made the round of the building and had run the gauntlet on all sides, were we left a

moment to ourselves. On our return the interest in us had a good deal subsided. In one stall we found leisure to notice a young grisette, who was surveying herself in a worn-out Venetian mirror, and showing coquettish satisfaction at the becoming qualities of a bright salmon-coloured silk dress she had tried on. We could see her gracile form swaying to and fro as at one moment her pretty head would be turned sideways over her shoulders, as at another it would be tossed high with conscious pride, while she chattered with the approving saleswoman about her Jules and a *fête* they were going to at Asnières, and glanced occasionally at a moody Jewish-looking gentleman who leaned awkwardly over the counter and offered her his ready-made sympathy.

Presently came the question of terms, which had been postponed to the last, and this involved endless sweet contention accompanied by the most graceful gestures and counter-gestures. The first sum named was two hundred francs, with a long catalogue of the beauty, work, etc., of the dress. This proposition was received with an interrogatory smile, a lifting of white hands, and a breathless "*Mais Madame!*" Then the dress swayed about in the shadow-land of the glass again, and a little face seemed looking at the lower folds from a great elevation with something very

like a sneer. Then the pouting lips were compressed, the long eye-lashes made to droop lazily, and the eyebrows to arch themselves superciliously. Then the moody gentleman suggested, in rather thick accents, "*Cent cinquante francs.*" The mirror vibrated a shrug of pretty shoulders. Then followed more chaffering as amiable as the preceding. Then the little head shook itself like a fist; the bodice was rapidly loosened, and two pearly shoulders peeped from the fastenings. There was a pause. The shoulders shrugged themselves back into their silk covering; a slender hand dipped into a pocket, brought out a purse, and eighty francs were counted out to the moody gentleman, who received them with a heavy bow. The grisette tripped down the line of stalls, daintily gathering up the folds of the dress as she sped along, while the moody gentleman came out to the door like a toy-messenger of bad weather, mumbling to himself "*En voilà un type.*"

Then we went along a side aisle composed almost entirely of one long *baraque*, the largest we had yet seen. It was hung with the most brilliant costumes of all colours, and in every way had a brighter aspect than any of the rest.

"This stall," said Goday, "ought to interest you."

Then he took me by the arm and said:—

"Look through this slip-window and you will see something, I think, that you have seen before."

I bent forward and looked through a little gap made among the costumes, and saw a face I seemed to know. It was a woman's with large dark eyes and blue-black hair, but the cheeks were paler, and the eyes more eager than those with which I was familiar. I turned to Goday and said:—

"*Tiens, elle n'a plus de fard*; but for you I should scarcely have known her again—and should never have spied her out. You are certainly a clearer-up of mysteries in this place of masks—this Paris. But——"

"I know what you're going to say," said my friend, interrupting me as if he were determined I should not proceed. "You want to know where so elegant a creature could possibly have been educated to have become so familiar with *argot* as she appeared to be while rating her humble domestic. If you were to be much in this building, you would hear as much of that expressive language as is to be met with in the Halles Centrales. I know what you mistook her for; you thought she was one of those wealthy *poissardes* who, while they deal in fish, conversing with each other in the intervals of business in that most expressive brogue, retire to their elegant apartments, where, rigged out in jewels and silks, they sit on velvet

cushions, and entertain their friends as grandly as the best."

"You're wrong for once," I replied, "though I certainly had the intention of talking over that matter of her *argot* with you. But——"

MADEMOISELLE.

"But," said I to Goday, resuming my question, "there remains yet a good deal to clear up: Who is Madame L'Estrange's husband?"

"I knew that would be your next question," he answered; "you're coming to dinner with me, and in the course of the evening, I promise to amuse you with a romantic little history."

As we sat over our claret, he rose and took something from his bureau.

"Shall I tell you about it?" he said, "or would you like to hear the authentic particulars? I have them from a gentleman, an early friend of mine, who has been, almost ever since the events transpired, in safer hands than his own."

"Oh! the real story by all means."

"This is how he tells it," said Goday:—

At the Pension P——, at this very time last year I met a singularly bewitching girl. I was at the

déjeuner, and she entered the *salon* for the first time. I raised my eyes with the usual curiosity, but was dazzled: for a time, as if under some spell, I could not look again. A bright face, with its flowing muslin veil, an exquisite form in rustling rose-coloured silk had flitted by; but her image remained where I saw her first—though I felt her beautiful presence opposite me at the further end of the table. I could not yet look there; to me she was still entering; I was the breathless prisoner of a new emotion. My heart throbbed violently; my appetite was gone. What did all this mean?

In a general way I am a man of great composure, and pride myself upon my cool and successful sallies in all affairs of the heart. Brought face to face with the fair sex, I know how to linger admiringly; now over a choice figure, now over a tempting neck and cheek, especially in the blushing season; and I know pretty well how to penetrate the arcana of a woman's eyes. What then meant this suspicious spell which had come over me?

With the fever of the new feeling still upon me, I tried to turn my eyes towards the spot where she was, and took the opportunity, while I poured out a glass of wine, of looking her full in the face. My hand trembled as I saw the lustrous dark hair; the bright forehead;

the downcast eyes; the drooping lashes; the neck in the pink penumbra of a flowing ribbon; the little hand that seemed overweighted by the heavy gold bracelet that hung loose at the wrist.

I now drew breath again, and began to recover my presence of mind. I bethought myself of my former triumphs, and smiled at the anachronism of a man like myself invaded by the *fièvre de canon* after having more than won his spurs. I determined to approach her at the first favourable moment, but, in spite of my good resolutions, there was an impediment in my way which I had encountered often, but never before under circumstances so formidable. It was her look of perfect modesty, which seemed to throw an impassable atmosphere around her. But the opportunity of addressing her was soon at hand. The company showed signs of breaking up; some few had already risen and gone away; others were pensively folding up their *serviettes*, or, as is our custom, attaching them to their unfinished bottles of Bordeaux. At length all had filed out—but one—whose fingers were still at play with a bunch of purple grapes, which one by one she raised to her dainty lips. I feared she might observe in me some *gaucherie* as I told her, with a bow, that she had not been long in Paris; but I need not have been afraid, for in lifting her eyes to reply they were

not fully directed towards me, and as she answered, "No," with a thrilling note, my ideas played me such vagaries that I thought there was just room between her lips for that other grape which she held between her fingers. This is always the way when one is at a loss; some grotesque idea invariably crosses us instead of our thinking of the right thing to say. But her abstracted look baffled me. There are women who have it when lost in thought, but she had that half-seeing, abstracted eye, under an arch brow, which seemed to hide her thoughts even from herself. Neither her gaze nor her thoughts appeared to reach the object towards which they were directed. When I told her, with my best smile, that she would find Paris very charming, she evidently did not see my smile or exactly seize on the purport of my words, but with a look that missed its aim and seemed fantastically to graze my ear, which tingled with excitement, she answered, that it was not like St. Petersburg.

I was sure she had not yet seen my face, which was rather mortifying, for I did all I could to attract her attention and was getting her features by heart while I revelled in their perfections. Our conversation was brief: she soon flitted from the deserted *salon*. So long as it lasted, I attributed to indifference her rare dreaminess of manner, and bethought myself that it

would take me as long to win her out of her abstraction into reality as it would to gain another woman's heart outright. It was a little discouraging to a man of my easy temper; nevertheless the prize seemed all the more worth the winning.

I will now confess that her beauty, and still more that charming abstraction, had got entire possession of me. I was not one to fall hopelessly in love with a beautiful girl: what I liked was to be always a little in love—and no more. In fact I had had many experiences, I do not say all my own, but those of others too; these had induced me to form the resolution never to marry. I had seen that beauty soon fades, that love at best dwindles into friendship, and I had taken into my consideration the squealing horrors of a nursery, the satiating details of milliners' bills and of children's fancy dresses and the involuntary payment of school accounts and of allowances to grown-up boys and girls. I was not a man, therefore, to plunge blindfold into domestic bliss; and I knew that I could resist beauty, however alluring, by contrasting it with the pains and penalties that its possession entails. But—that abstraction—I had never seen the like of it before; I was unarmed against its ravishment. The richest beauty seems only to draw one towards the lips, but this abstraction drew me

into her soul. I became in a moment unselfish, and set all my former resolutions at nought: I would have married her in that very hour.

I had mapped out my plans for the day,—the morning to the Louvre, the afternoon to the Musée de Cluny, the evening to the Français,—but as the day advanced my poor programme was neglected. I started more than once, but something seemed to draw me back. I walked up and down in the vicinity of the *pension* in that vacillating way which a man has when he has forgotten something, he scarce knows what, until I felt ashamed of my indecision. All my zeal for sight-seeing had vanished, and it was not until I persuaded myself of the possibility of her going to the Louvre and of my meeting her there that I carried out my original plan. In dragging through the galleries I found myself looking at portraits and pictures for something which was not there;—that look of abstraction which haunted me. The dreaminess of the Cenci's eyes was nothing to what I sought, that inner world of a mysterious being, that world inhabited only by one. The Sibyls certainly looked thoughtful; the Magdalens rapt—but what had the artists of the past all been about? There was but one picture to me and that had never been painted. As I sauntered back through the gardens of the Tuileries I now scrutinized

faces as I had done pictures; the sadness and the joyousness of these seemed equally ill-founded. What could others have to trouble them? Was there anyone so isolated in soul as myself? And, what could others really have to rejoice at? There was but one joy in the world and that was victory over the heart of my beloved. But what fools people looked to me when they laughed! I went on, forgetting the Musée de Cluny altogether, and became so deeply entangled myself in the mazes of abstraction that I suddenly started as though I were on the point of meeting Her in her own world, and looked about to see if she might not be near.

She was not at the dinner that day, but she appeared at the evening party in the drawing-room most wonderfully dressed and delicately jewelled. She had all the tints of the fresh morning upon her, which a woman is so apt to exchange during a dinner for the less attractive flush,—indeed, she had all the radiance which a blooming beauty has when in the open air. She recognized me and bowed, but it seemed as if it were to my shadow, for her eyes glanced by rather than towards me. She took her seat on a couch by the side of Madame D——, our good hostess (not that this is her real initial any more than P. is that of the *pension* where we stayed: secrecy is my aim now). I sat not

far off watching her every movement and listening to the tones of her voice,—chords of music such as I had never heard before. After a time Madame D——— left her to bestow her attention on some other guests; then, as Mademoiselle leant backward on the lounge with her hand and fan hanging over her knee, the cherry-coloured velvet band at her wrist rippling over her pale cashmere dress, her aspect was more ravishingly impervious than ever,—but why try to penetrate a woman's soul whose countenance reveals only absence of mind. She was as one who, while she held her fan, now slightly raised and with her eyes upon it, seemed gazing at herself in her hand-glass and not to perceive her own image.

Had she been any other woman on earth, I should have taken the vacant place at her side, but like a rare object of art she seemed railed in, though by some invisible barrier. Then her eyes were raised; her gaze fell on me; it rested on me several seconds, but exactly as though she were looking at vacancy. I trembled; I became confused; then in a sort of fit of desperation I rose and sat by her and made several vague remarks which I found myself amending, one after another, as they escaped me, when the *bizarre* idea came up that I was like a man correcting the press. But she came to my relief. We talked for half an hour, and a wonderful

conversation it was. I tried to become intimate with her, but in vain; there was a film of ice between us, which, thin as it was, I could not see my way through or break. Yet she talked freely, but it was in such measured tones; and she spoke rather as to a listener —I might almost say to herself—than to one whom she wished to hear reply. She seemed to be a perfect child of nature! When I heard her sentiments I trembled for her safety in a world so designing, so ready at all times to take advantage of the innocent and pure-minded. The subject that constantly came uppermost was Communism,—and what noble sentiments she expressed!

"In free countries," she said, "the will of many governs the actions of all; but I have been reared in a country where the will of one first governs the will of all. What hope is there for the Commune with us? Yet I love my country. Have you ever been at St. Petersburg?"

I said "No," and would have said more but she did not listen.

"Look at the unhappy union," she continued, "between those who believe themselves suited to each other for life; when they find out their mistake, is not that misery?"

She said this in a tone so thrilling that it smote my

heart. "Ah! beautiful one," thought I, "you little think how false men are, how little to be trusted, how readily they abandon the most gifted and lovely among women, when the law favours their caprice." But, somehow, I could not say this; I only felt how safe her honour and welfare would be in hands like mine—that abstract look would remain with her to the last!

"Why should people be bound together in misery?" she went on saying, and her thoughts seemed to wander through worlds of sorrow. At this moment she was called away to the piano, and I thought that the more natural her sentiments were, the more difficult she would be to win.

After that evening I met her often in the same manner, but did not appear to make the slightest progress in my endeavours to gain her affection. Whenever we met there was the same icy barrier between us; and, though it thawed towards the end of each interview it froze again during the hours of our absence from each other. She spoke as no other woman ever spoke, sometimes on art, sometimes about the French drama, and even on natural history: her knowledge seemed marvellous. Her views on all subjects were those of the most advanced thinkers; and she sometimes quitted her abstract attitude and burst into a fervour of expression which might have

brought down applause on Rachel, one of the greatest actresses of our age. Doré might have revelled in her interpretations of art-symbols; our great scientists might have learnt from her to love as well as understand the order of Nature. Oh! the agony of mind she caused me to pass through! In the midst of all her fervour that abstract look would again set in; the ice would form before my eyes, and not all my eloquence, for I did my best, could again melt it.

I had not known her more than a fortnight, when one morning she was not present at the *déjeuner*, but came into the *salon* after all the guests except myself had retired. She betrayed some little trepidation,—she had a letter in her hand,—she said:

"I thought I should like to take leave of you. My mother, the Countess De L———, is coming to-night, and we leave Paris to-morrow. She has reached Marseilles."

I said with emotion:

"You have had no breakfast."

"No," she said, "I have been packing all the morning; I have no *femme de chambre* here; but I am ready for my journey."

I heard myself say, for the words were spoken before I had time to think:

"O mademoiselle! I love you!"

She became slightly pale, but only put out her hand to complete her leave-taking:

"We cannot meet again," she said; "my mother is severe——"

She was about to retire. I seized her hand.

"Have pity on me," I said; "I love you as no man ever loved before——"

She did not withdraw her hand. She looked at me for a moment. Her eyes, of which I had only seen the full power before in moments of unguarded enthusiasm, began to glow; they broke into an expression of divine rapture. She fell pale and trembling into my arms.

Before nightfall we had reached Aix-les-Bains. If I had guessed her beautiful and true nature during the short period of our acquaintance in Paris, I now realized it all. The place to which we had eloped was a heaven in itself. We lived on the beautiful lake between the many-coloured mountains; there we formed plans for the future. What a sacrifice she had made through her love for me! I could only repay it by devoting my whole life and fortune to her. Near Aix-les-Bains in one of the most picturesque spots of Savoy there was an estate with a charming villa for sale. We were both equally pleased with the situation. I engaged to purchase it and had so far

advanced in my proposed plans as to have received the purchase-money, not an inconsiderable sum, from my banker in Paris. As the purchase was not to be completed for a day or two, I placed this sum, which was in Banque de France notes, in the hands of my sweet Sigismunda, but alas! my hopes for the time were suddenly destroyed.

One evening as I sat by her side thinking what I could do to increase her happiness, she expressed a wish for some water-lilies which we had seen at the margin of the lake on the previous day. I longed to see her fair hands arranging them in a vase which stood empty upon the table and told her that within an hour or two what she so much desired should be hers. I got into the boat and was soon skimming over the water towards that lovely margin which nature had planted like a garden on crystal soil. I returned loaded with the treasures of Eden, and as I placed the lilies on the table felt only one disappointment, which was that Sigismunda was not there to meet me. I sought her in her chamber which, to my surprise, was in possession of a gentleman—a perfect stranger to me—who saluted me coldly as I entered.

"Pray, sir," said he, "where is Mademoiselle ——, who has been living here under your protection?"

"Where is she?" I said in blank amazement. "Where is she?" and I sat down stupefied.

"According to her custom," said the stranger, "she has vanished."

He then entered into a wholly incredible detail of her past adventures which I heard with scorn. But—she was gone! Her wardrobe was left. There hung her *robe de chambre*—a spectral image of her lovely self. All was unchanged. In fact the only things missing were her jewel-case and the pocket-book which contained the purchase-money for the estate. I struck my breast in dismay and could only exclaim: "It is a mystery; there has been some foul play; alas, her very being is a mystery;—that look of abstraction—but she will return to me yet if she lives."

I have since sought her in St. Petersburg, at Florence, at Vienna, at Constantinople, and now again in Paris—but hitherto in vain.

There is some deep mystery in this sad affair—and, though twelve months have elapsed since she disappeared, all will yet be cleared up.

"Poor fellow," said Goday, as he ended.

"But you don't mean," said I, "that this girl and Madame L'Estrange are one and the same."

"I do," said Goday.

"Good heavens! is it possible!" I exclaimed.

"Stranger things than this are possible in Paris. She is a clever woman and after a few adventures she discovered that there is no more certain means of making a fortune than respectability. For some years past she had been amassing large sums of money and I don't know any woman in this city whose life is more blameless than hers at this present time."

"Is her unfortunate lover then insane?" I asked.

"He is in a kind of ecstasy," my friend answered, "and appears always to be awaiting Sigismunda's return. Though he is in the neighbourhood of Paris, he believes himself still to be at Aix-les-Bains. He has lately become taciturn, not answering questions with any other words than those which first reached his lips after his shock, 'She will return to me yet, if she lives!'"

I inquired if his friends had not communicated to him the fact of her being alive and within reach; whether they had not proposed an interview.

"There was a consultation of his friends and physicians when the discovery was made of her return to Paris in her present character, and it was decided that he should be asked if he wished to see her. The effect which this question produced upon him was very re-

markable: it brought him for a short time to a natural condition. "Is that wretched woman discovered?" he said indignantly. "Then I will have her prosecuted for all the infamous deceptions she has practised on me." After this and many other expressions of anger, he lapsed into his former state, saying, "She will return to me if she lives; all will yet be cleared up." "You perceive," added Goday, "that to reconcile him to her is on every account impracticable, and that she never uttered truer words than when she said, 'Why should people be bound together in misery?'"

Léon Ruchaton

FLÂNEURS AND BADAUDS.

GODAY and I at one time amused ourselves by studying how in their several ways those imitators of Grotius, aptly called *flâneurs* and *badauds*, while away their days in laboriously doing nothing. These *fainéants* are a curious set; these *indigènes* of the boulevards and the Pays Latin, compared with whom loafers, loungers, and lazzaroni are but meaner types.

These peripatetics of the sweet Do-nothing philosophy differ only in that the *badaud* is a Parisian *pur sang*, while the *flâneur* may be a foreign importation; but in the matter of *flânerie* and *badauderie* they are about on a par.

Feeling the southern sentiment of *dolce far niente* full upon us, Goday and I one day sauntered out into the great thoroughfares. It was one of those clear autumnal days peculiar to Paris, when both classes of the peripatetics come out and loiter in the flagging

sun. The boulevards, as we went along, were alive with all manner of human *megatheria;* some creeping listlessly along, looking into the gaily-dressed shops; others lolling lazily on chairs before the busy *cafés;* while the less pecunious portion lay stretched at full length on the green benches under the upright trees.

On such a day as this, the *flâneur par excellence,* doffing his silken fez, dressing-gown, and slippers, begins at midday the important work of the toilet, and after the usual tardy process of equipment, turns out spic and span upon his pet promenade to stretch his languid limbs, to cool with soothing drinks the fever of last night's revels, or force with cordials new strength for coming bouts. He drones along the pavement like some wingless thing, amid other ephemera, come out for a short hour to bask in the sloping rays. The *flâneur* of the *bas étage,* likewise abroad, is dawdling about the thresholds of low cabarets, or imbibing the cooling beverage sold by the *marchand de coco.* That queer nomad of the boulevards, with his red pagoda slung at his back and his great bunch of shining metal drinking-cups at his side that he clinks incessantly, is the good angel of idlers,—nay, he is a born *badaud,* and, but for the light thread of industry that binds him to the great world of purpose, he were an arch-Flâneur.

Industry in dress may count for something as an apology for idleness, but the nests of *flâneurs* in the Quartier Latin have not even this merit. The rust of their souls seems to lodge itself on their very garments. Perhaps among this horde none are more notable than the Oriental students and the Guadaloupians. One of these latter I have been accustomed to observe at the Salon de l'Absinthe, with his rings in his ears and a ruby on his soiled scarf, and his long opium pipe always in his hand, sometimes loading it while shivering in the horrors of narcotic fever, sometimes drawing out its fumes while his worn-out, sallow face lights up, and his eyes sink deeper and deeper into a dream.

We had determined to dine at the Café d'Orléans, so turning down towards the Palais-Royal we entered that restaurant so dear to the memory of *gourmets*. There were manifold signs that the all-important hour of the day was fast approaching. The marble tables spread about the saloons were being delicately clad in snow-white cloths, and furnished with bright glass and shining silver; waiters who had been vegetating the livelong day in the domain of kitchen exhalations were speeding about in anxious unrest, busy with the weight of coming responsibility; the lustres about the walls, at the touch of the *portier's* wand, throbbed one by

one into light; and that never-failing goddess of the Parisian feast, the *patronne,* took her place behind her raised shrine in one corner of the room.

While all this was passing, Goday, who loves to handle a *menu* and a wine-list, had been settling certain knotty points in the matter of our dinner.

Among the tables that had been undergoing changes, one in particular struck me, presenting as it did the appearance of something special in the way of a coming banquet. Upon the damask cloth, in addition to the usual vitreous and other paraphernalia, were placed superb ornaments of frosted silver, baskets of glowing peaches and plump pears, and, in the centre, a grand tureen of purple grapes covered with crystal cubes of ice,—a feast such as Porphyro spread for fair Madeleine on St. Agnes' Eve—fit for one's self in a *recherchée* mood—the whole a picture, and though of still life, not long to remain so. While wondering for whom this delicately arranged table might be, the swing door of the *café* opened and a party of four came in, two languidly dressed ladies accompanied by two gentlemen in evening attire with red moss-roses in their button-holes. At a glance it was apparent that the ladies were Parisians, from the exquisite taste of their toilette, the elegance of their gestures, and their perfect *tournure.* Their silks rustled like fountains,

and they left behind them the perfume of a summer breeze. Of their companions, one was a short, white-haired, smooth-faced, portly old gentleman with a kindly, credulous smile. The other had a face I had seen before somewhere, and more than once, which had, on each occasion of our meeting, puzzled me, while each time it struck me as peculiar. He seemed, however, changed. His dark hair had been left to grow, and flowed back negligently from his temples, his beard was gone, leaving its blue shadow on his cheek and chin, and his gummed moustachios pointed fiercely east and west. His dark, restless eyes, however, had their look of fun. His dress had the air of intended carelessness about it, with an undoubted aim at the romantic, the shirt being low cut and the turn-down collar exposing an ample throat. While I was engaged in puzzling over this man's metamorphosis, the party had seated themselves, taken in hand their *serviettes* and commenced a sumptuous dinner *à la Russe*.

"Goday," I said at last, "you know everybody. Who is that man? I have seen him somewhere, and could never make him out. Now he is quite changed."

Goday, who was deeply engaged over a *pâté de foie gras*, looked up.

"Whom do you mean?" he said, "the old boy?

No? Ah! I see who's the riddle, and am not surprised. Well yes, he is changed; I know all about him. We were talking this morning of the species *flâneur;* in him you have the *flâneur par excellence.* There are a good many of them in this centre of loungers, but I shall never see his like again! He exults in Fabianism. His name," he continued in a lower voice, "is Vaugirard. He is of a good family of Tours. Ten years ago, he was sent to the Quartier Latin to make his *droit,* and he is about as far advanced towards this end as when he arrived, as yet having only graduated in the great school of *flânerie.* With a liberal allowance he first went in for well-bound books and studies, having the youthful desire to distinguish himself among his fellow-students, but that circle did not long satisfy him; students do not admire books or their owners; the mild products of laborious brains stood no chance against those of Havana, Champagne, Bordeaux; nay, the works of the man who clips Saxon cloths to the human shape, who shears silken drapery into the idle folds of the *robe de chambre;* they are more telling than the inane axioms of literary lawyers who indite commentaries on Napoleonic codes; so he entered on a more becoming extravagance, a more genial dissipation, and not till then was he the genius of the student's

quarter. Though his face degenerated, grew musty and shrunken where the dimples should have held sway, he still looked youthful when flushed with generous drink, that is, in the artificial lights of the evening, for inebriation is unbecoming in the daytime. In this new line he was conspicuous among *gommeux*, and would say with the most graceful wave of the hand, "Elegance animates repose." His escapades would fill a volume to bursting; but though he makes the wildest efforts to live in the seventh heaven of *flânerie*, he beats against adversity with but a lame wing. He is a poor man now; he wears his own cast-off clothes, so this surprising change cannot last for long. It is some fresh freak of the expiring taper, some frothing out of a dead bottle that once knew effervescence. And that rythmical inflection of his voice, that languishing die-away look! How charmed, too, are his entertainers at all this! Why, they're calling him Monsieur Saint-Cyr; we must get to the bottom of this."

Goday had scarcely said these words, when a gentleman entered at the further end of the *café* and walked down the saloon towards us. The party on which our attention had been for some time fixed was about to leave, probably for the theatre or some other entertainment, and the old gentleman of the group, with

his hand full of napoleons, was preparing to settle with the waiter, under a mild protest from Vaugirard. "No, no," said the old gentleman, putting his hand forward on that of Monsieur Vaugirard; "it is our privilege and pleasure to entertain Monsieur Saint-Cyr, our illustrious poet."

The stranger, who had entered at this moment, was passing the festive table. He stopped and lifted his hat. "Did you address me, Monsieur?" he said, "though not illustrious, I am Monsieur Saint-Cyr." This announcement was succeeded by silence and suppressed laughter, when the old gentleman said, "Pardon, I was addressing Monsieur Saint-Cyr, the poet, who is our guest." The stranger for the moment was a little confused. "It is unimportant," said he, "but it is strange that there should be two gentlemen and two poets in Paris bearing that name, and equally illustrious. But it is unimportant." Upon which he emphatically placed his card on the table and withdrew. Monsieur Vaugirard seemed greatly embarrassed, and as soon as the stranger seemed to be out of hearing, he let fall the word "impostor;" but the ears of the true poet were too quick for him. Monsieur Saint-Cyr returned in high dudgeon. "No, sir, it is you who are the impostor! You are personating me before this estimable party. I know you well—

you are Léon Vaugirard, the would-be law student—the distinguished *flâneur* of the boulevards."

A scene of much confusion ensued, which ended in Monsieur Vaugirard being left in the *café* alone with his rival Monsieur Saint-Cyr, seated at an adjoining table, frowning in silence.

Vaugirard assumed a lounging attitude, which brought him nearer to Monsieur Saint-Cyr.

"I am sure, Monsieur Saint-Cyr," he said, "that you will take this little affair in good part as no harm was meant, and you know what it is to be a young fellow yourself."

"You are extremely welcome, Monsieur, to personate me at any time when you may think yourself able to sustain the character honestly. On this occasion I must offer an objection to your having procured the clothes you sit in under the credit of my name, but no doubt that was only a part of the freak you have been playing with some of my unknown admirers. Nevertheless, you are no doubt prepared to satisfy your tailor as fully as you have done your friends who have just left. It was his enquiries at my house, and a few of the minor incidents attendant on them, that brought me here. Having said thus much, I will take my leave, and resign you to him who waits outside."

On saying this, Monsieur Saint-Cyr rose with dignity and proceeded towards the door of the *café*, on opening which the tailor entered, and with a quick gait approached the table at which Vaugirard still lounged.

We had finished our dinner, and out of compassion for the unlucky *flâneur* we at once rose and left.

BETTING MEN OUT OF WORK.

Our Act of Parliament of 1873, prohibiting access to the racecourse to all intermediaries called bookmakers, and inflicting penalty upon all who in any way assist them towards the accomplishment of their manœuvres, has driven flights of these tame vultures across the channel, who, not able to find sufficient prey on native unforbidden soil, continue to arrive daily, eager to carry on their predatory pursuits without interruption in Paris. The consequence is, that Longchamps has for some time past made a livelier show of English than of native bookmakers, and the Rue de Choiseul has not only become the "'Change" of these levanters, but has lived to suffer the indignity of being christened Chisel Street by the wags of this choice community. For a long time the *Agences des Courses* have been crowded to overflowing by an eager public; the proprietors have been minting money, and the bookmaker, since his ostracism, has led the life of a Sybarite.

But life is at best a lottery, and these piccaroons who trifle with the fortunes of others have recently experienced a serious blow to their own. Their flourishing condition did not escape the vigilant eye of the police, who one day took advantage of the vagaries of the foremost among them to make a raid upon the agencies in the height of their success, and bore their treasure before justice.

For several succeeding days a sturdy gendarme paced proudly up and down, keeping a strict surveillance over the closed temples of lucre. A rigid investigation before the Procureur-Général followed, and the causes of this run of success are now well known. According to the Article 1966 of the *Code Civil*, betting is tolerated if characterised by the fairness and intelligence of the parties concerned. These principles have been respected by the members of the *Société d'Encouragement pour l'amélioration de la race chevaline en France*, and are conveyed in one of their laws, namely, "*Celui qui ne peut pas gagner ne doit pas perdre.*" The examination of "*les bookmakers*" in August, 1875, at the Tribunal Correctionnel, showed that these principles had been violated by a variety of frauds foisted upon a misinformed public, and that the infamous practices of these adepts in *escroquerie* had brought them in a golden harvest.

Their principal device had been the issuing of lists of horses to the public, and betting large sums against those that they knew to be scratched, besides withholding information which they took care to use for their own advantage, together with the use of pseudonyms, to the confusion of interested parties.

Since the eventful day of their reverse, the agencies have seen no light, and Chisel Street has lost all the animation that distinguished its palmier days. Yet, notwithstanding its sombre, dejected aspect, its former patrons, with that mysterious feeling inseparable from disaster, still linger around the scene of their misfortune, dividing their vagrant hours between the dirty parlours of "The Silver Spur," and the "Golden Gridiron," the two notorious *tavernes Anglaises* of the neighbourhood. Here they may be seen sunning their chilled hopes in the warm companionship of their brethren, quaffing their tankard of ale, and blowing their innocuous weed. For, notwithstanding the frowns of fortune, many of them are still revelling in a mushroom prosperity, and it is their pleasure to keep you continually reminded of this fact by an officious and lavish generosity quite their own. They will stand you anything you like to drink, or play you at cards or dominoes for whatever stake you name. They have some patronage, too, at their command,

which they exercise with unselfish suavity, so that the "young blood" hang upon their every word, in the hope of picking up "tips" for coming events, or the position, generally in their gift, of race-clerk on some coming occasion.

Between the hours of eleven and one, when all Paris goes out to *déjeuner*, the "Silver Spur" is not less crowded by its adherents than other restaurants. But the meal is gone through in so loose and desultory a manner, that the place forms a striking contrast even to the most unpretending cabaret, the tables are crowded with the more prosperous of the bookmakers, who as a rule divide their attention between a game of cards and the savoury dish before them; whilst their less fortunate and more hungry brethren around the bar cast longing glances at the hissing gridiron in the corner, chaff the waiter, and inwardly curse the nature and condition of things. Notwithstanding the fact, that business with these gentlemen may be said to be flat in the extreme, they are never to be seen without their betting-books, and are unceasingly jotting down notes upon their tablets, though to what else than to their fruitful imagination these mysterious records owe their origin, it is difficult to suppose. Nevertheless, down they go, and each note is succeeded by an approving attitude, almost theatrical in its conscious

sagacity. A good deal of chaff is dealt about at times, and not seldom at the expense of unoffending strangers who may chance to drop in, but in a jargon unintelligible to outsiders. Much of the humour has its source in a Herculean Scotchman, a constant frequenter of the place, drawn here by early visions of seething milk and porridge.

The ruling spirit of this mixed company is a certain Dan Zedder, a gentleman of versatile genius and of considerable knowledge of turf lore, who, being in nowise affected by the late reverses, still continues to enliven the boulevards by his furious driving, and to keep up in undiminished extravagance his villa at Passy. In Dan's nature there is a strange mixture of the horse and man; he is a centaur that looks upon life as a racecourse whereon men stake their fortunes to win or lose, to trick or be tricked, to come in with flying colours or be dead-beat. These principles, and an adherence to the motto of, "Throw your heart over the hedge and your horse will follow," it is Dan's pride to inform you, have pulled him through and left him fresh. Unpleasant truths are sometimes audibly whispered in his presence, regarding his visit to Paris, but Dan on these occasions strokes his chin in silence, and assumes the air of a Royal exile. That he once played a prominent part on British soil may be seen

from his full-length portrait, hung above the bar, in which he is represented as holding the bridle of a thorough-bred in his hand, with the sun-scorched downs of Epsom as a background. It had appeared in a paper called the "Turf," when Dan was in full swing, when

His pride was in piquet,
Newmarket fame, and judgment at a bet.

The artist has delineated in this coloured drawing Dan's most striking characteristics with a truthfulness beyond all praise. The close-shaven face, so flat and long; the nose that has so far encroached beyond its allotted space as to dominate the chin, the large firm mouth, the grey eyes, watery and watchful, that seem to be continually exchanging confidences over the wide isthmus of flesh that separates them; and lastly, the large and somewhat pointed ears, whose corrugated proportions stand up in bold and fiery relief against his close-cut bristly black hair. His pale lemon-coloured coat and leathern breeches would render his appearance thoroughly washed-out, were it not for the presence of a necktie rich in rainbows.

A prominent member of the opposition is a gentleman who rejoices in the sobriquet of Black Raoul, on account of his swarthy complexion. His bushy head of hair is jet black, and the pointed beard straggling

down among the frills of his white shirt is of the same colour. I know not why it is—one never can account for these irrelevant associations, but it always puts me in mind of an unfortunate beetle on its back, struggling with its destiny. His eyes and complexion, too, are dark, and his nose, in its opalescent changes, is a sort of hygroscope that reveals the nature and extent of his potations. Of his nationality no one knows anything, but it is whispered that he comes of the Alsatian Jews.

Whenever discussions arise, which is by no means unfrequently, between the French jockeys and the more accomplished of the bookmakers, Dan Zedder is always referred to as the guardian of insular interests, whilst Black Raoul is looked to as champion of the tricolor. While these last, they bring out a good deal of caustic repartee, but they mostly terminate in personalities as unwarrantable as the one which Dan Zedder made use of the other day, when he called his rival a cannibal for eating frogs, and hinted that if he ate ass's flesh he should apply the same name to him still more emphatically. So cruel a suggestion of his near relationship to the animal kingdom completely crushed his opponent, who, disdaining further reply than a shrug of the shoulders, sought sympathy wherewith to soothe his injured feelings from his chattering

brethren. Once or twice these debates, when too clamorous, have been brought to an abrupt conclusion by the innocent intervention of the giant Scotchman. Sitting there like a Magog, silent and unconcerned in the midst of their noisy debate, his phlegmatic indifference has often turned its current by tickling the fancy of some one of them, and the contagion spreading, the fierce discussion would end in a universal burst of laughter, succeeded by sarcastic innuendoes directed against the unoffending Celt, who invariably received them with the indifference and solemnity of the sphinx.

Wherever you meet any of these Greeks, whether on highways or byways, at the *café* among their equine intimates, or in the *crêmerie* among the modest *ouvrières*, you will be treated to a farrago of oaths such as you dreamt not of before. Oaths are the hinges upon which they open, swing, and close their conversations, they are part and parcel of their constitutions; a hideous *patois* acquired in the lowest provinces of Bohemia—a malignant poison without one touch of humour.

Sometimes their gatherings are very noisy; but at all of them one thing is especially noteworthy. If a dispute does arise, it never reaches a quarrel; before it attains that point, a bet, that king of peace-

makers, comes to the rescue, and the matter at issue sinks to the level of matter-of-fact. As the day wanes, the parlours of the "Golden Gridiron" and the "Silver Spur" tone down into that melancholy desolation that succeeds debauch; and if you happen to pass either of these haunts after dark, they are usually deserted. Even the lights are, except perhaps a solitary candle, left flickering in the back-parlour; shadowy forms hover about, whistling drearily some popular air, their desperate fists dug deep into their bankrupt pockets. The brighter spirits are gone, some to the Café de Bade, where they may be seen in the full swing of enjoyment; others, and by far the greater number, to the *Maisons de Jeu*, there to continue their devotion to the goddess Chance, perhaps to meet with and pluck some young greenhorn, who will lose his money willingly, confident that he is gaining knowledge from his astute preceptor.

But the race-course at Longchamps is still the spot at which they crowd, and though they cut but a poor figure there at present as compared with former days, they have patriotism left, and are still sensible to the charms of thimble-rig in the open air as well as in the tavern. But the French "Bobby" has an eye for the small, select crowd which on its part has a like eye for the "Bobby," and the holder of loaded dice, like

an acute general, knows how to select a position that commands the surrounding view and enables him and his friends, in a moment of danger, to disperse in perfect order. But for the present both in Chisel Street and on the course the halcyon days of the British betting man have departed from Paris, and like all others out of work, he lives on odd jobs, compelled when he enters a bet to give it a show of fairness which only turns out profitable when calculated on the principle that the favourite never wins.

THE PATRONNE D'HOTEL.

THERE is an hotel in the Quartier Saint-Germain that stands alone amidst the dust and *débris* of a fallen street, isolated from all other habitations through the industrious demolitions of the Commune. During the last days of a fierce period this havoc was done round about its walls, blood was spilt wastefully, and fire raged. A splendid palace near at hand, and two large hotels in the same street, were reduced to ruins by a mob that had lost its senses, and these stand in ghastly evidence of dreadful days. But the hotel still towers aloft in the very midst of devastation, having suffered nothing at the hands of the blood-thirsty communards. Though it has escaped the fury of those belligerents, it nevertheless inherits all the gloom which civil war monuments present; though stripped of its companion houses, it has a certain air of triumph, suggesting to the initiated how something more than chance had to do with its escape.

Before the Franco-German war this was one of the

briskest hotels of the neighbourhood, and Madame Laroche, the proprietress, prided herself in having her house full to overflowing of visitors the most *gentils*. Now the great house is almost empty, Madame Laroche relies on canvassers and tourist-agents, who send her consignments of unselect British subjects to live *en pension*—the sort of people who will see Paris but must "do it cheap," and who take up their abode in economical quarters, while they spend their day in the Rue de Rivoli and the Palais-Royal with all the airs of fashionables from the Hôtel du Louvre. But we know them again. Their occupation is gaping much into shops, but spending little money, which naturally tends to their walking procession-wise, one after the other, like Kaspar and his little ones of the German picture-book, from the tallest down to the vanishing point of the least member of the happy family.

Madame Laroche is not prepossessing on the whole, yet she has secured many a guest by her exquisite manner of reception. She is a little woman with a pinched face, with eyes like a good-humoured cat's, and a smile which to the simple is above suspicion. She sits all day in the twilight of the bureau before her accounts, aroused only now and then by the clink of the door-bell as the few occupants pass in and

out. This bureau is a large glass-case partitioned off from the entrance-hall, the walls of which have their mirrors that reflect Madame's spare form and face down diminishing vistas. Once in her den she is dead to sympathy, for which the laughing faces of the three English lads look out in vain as they clatter by, let loose from their sour aunt *au troisième*, and laden with armfuls of carefully packed newspapers, with which they make for the Barrière full of a childish conspiracy to torment the poor *employés de l'octroi* at the gates of the city.

The mainstay of Madame Laroche's establishment was a little French gentleman, who ostensibly lived at the hotel and paid his way like the rest, but who really spent the day at *cafés* frequented by foreigners, whose acquaintance he grubbed up, and whenever he found that they were dissatisfied with their hotels, left no stone unturned to persuade them into coming to Madame Laroche's—a splendid hotel with charges of a most moderate description. He dined at the *table d'hôte*, and having seen a good deal of other countries, how or in what capacity it is impossible to guess, was extremely entertaining—indeed, the life and soul of the party. He was as familiarly acquainted with all the galleries and exhibitions as a *laquais de place;* he knew all the best shops, and was so courteous as to

proffer himself to the best families in the hotel as their honorary cicerone. In the meantime, in return for this life of usefulness and gallantry, he not only received his board and lodging, but really took a commission of the shopkeepers on all the money that his friends spent at their magazines. When Madame Laroche was at all embarrassed by the pressure of business or wished to go out into the city, he facetiously took her place in the bureau, cheerfully handled pen, ink, paper, and accounts, and would utter some pleasantry on the subject to the guests as they passed in or out, telling them, in a manner which showed that he did not believe it himself, that he was promoted to the honourable office of Madame Laroche's clerk.

The parting guests, whom Monsieur invariably saw into their carriages, were always profuse in their acknowledgments of his great kindness and attention to them; and he would reply to all, "Ah! since the troubles, we French gentlemen are very poor. I sometimes think I shall ask you rich English to raise a little subscription for us. We have our honour still, but no money." By this means he often extracted a napoleon or two from his grateful friends, who were only too glad of the opportunity of gratifying their inclinations. But one of our French friend's

greatest successes was the capturing of a commandant: one day he returned in great glee to the hotel full of having secured this new guest. He had been to the Café Voltaire, and there had met the commandant, who apparently had been struck with his eloquent praise of the Hôtel Laroche, and had resolved to take up his quarters there forthwith. The commandant arrived just as the party was sitting down to dinner; and Madame, who seemed favourably impressed by his fine presence and gracious bearing, conceded to him the place of honour at her side. He soon ingratiated himself with her; after coffee she would play *écarté* or chess with him.

The little Frenchman at first looked on amused, though ere long his expression changed to that of jealousy, to which he would give vent at the piano, extemporising airs expressive of his rage on the seven-octave instrument, which would rise to a pitch transcending the eighth octave, when his hand would run up imaginary notes beyond the keys. Once in love with the commandant, Madame Laroche entered into crafty confidences with him, going back to her happy childhood, and the sacrifice she had made in marrying Monsieur Laroche in obedience to her parents, and how poor man he died soon after and left her with all the cares on her hands of the hotel

that bore his name. The commandant, who saw an opening for such merit as his, told his own story. He had been trained in the hated trade of imperialism, but hoped that he had put an end to more than one of his *confrères* in the exercise of his duties; for he had ever been a true Communist at heart, and believed yet in the day when the varnish on all the paintings at the Louvre would light the sky in one little flame; when the colossal Diana there would crackle in the blaze, and Paris would begin new life. She kissed his hand in rapture, and he pressed the lips of her who could so do homage to his lofty hopes.

It was a new era in their affection. Madame Laroche was inoculated with the poison of love; it was attended with some fever, with a little delirium, during which she declared herself a Communist as unflinching as himself, on which he seized her in his arms. "He had a good house of his own," he said, "well furnished, at Versailles; with her aptitudes might they not establish a *pension* there? he could throw up his situation." Her eyes sparkled;—"No," she replied, "throw up your situation and become the master here, then this large house will flourish." "I'll do it now," he said, and made a movement to retire, but she detained him that she might clinch his affections on the spot. "Listen, dearest," she said, as she held him close to

her; "I have sheltered many a Communist here, there was——" (and she told him all the names). "Heaven bless you," he answered. "One moment more, dearest," she added; "you see that ruined pile opposite? It blazed in the petroleum thrown on it by these hands!" "Heaven twice bless you," answered the commandant; "I leave you, only to go and throw up my situation; in an hour I will return a free man to your arms."

During this courtship a better understanding had gradually sprung up between the commandant and Monsieur, and now, as the former quitted the hotel, some whisperings passed between them, and some gold changed hands. The jealousy that Monsieur had nurtured was easily transformed into a desire for revenge and money.

Meantime Madame Laroche had retired to her room for the purpose of adding brilliancy to her charms and preparing herself to receive her lover in one of her finest dresses. In much less time than he had specified, the commandant returned with two gendarmes whom he left below.

"Let us have a pleasant walk together," he said, "we will talk over the future as we go along."

She acquiesced in his proposal with delight. As they passed the glass bureau in the hall, Monsieur

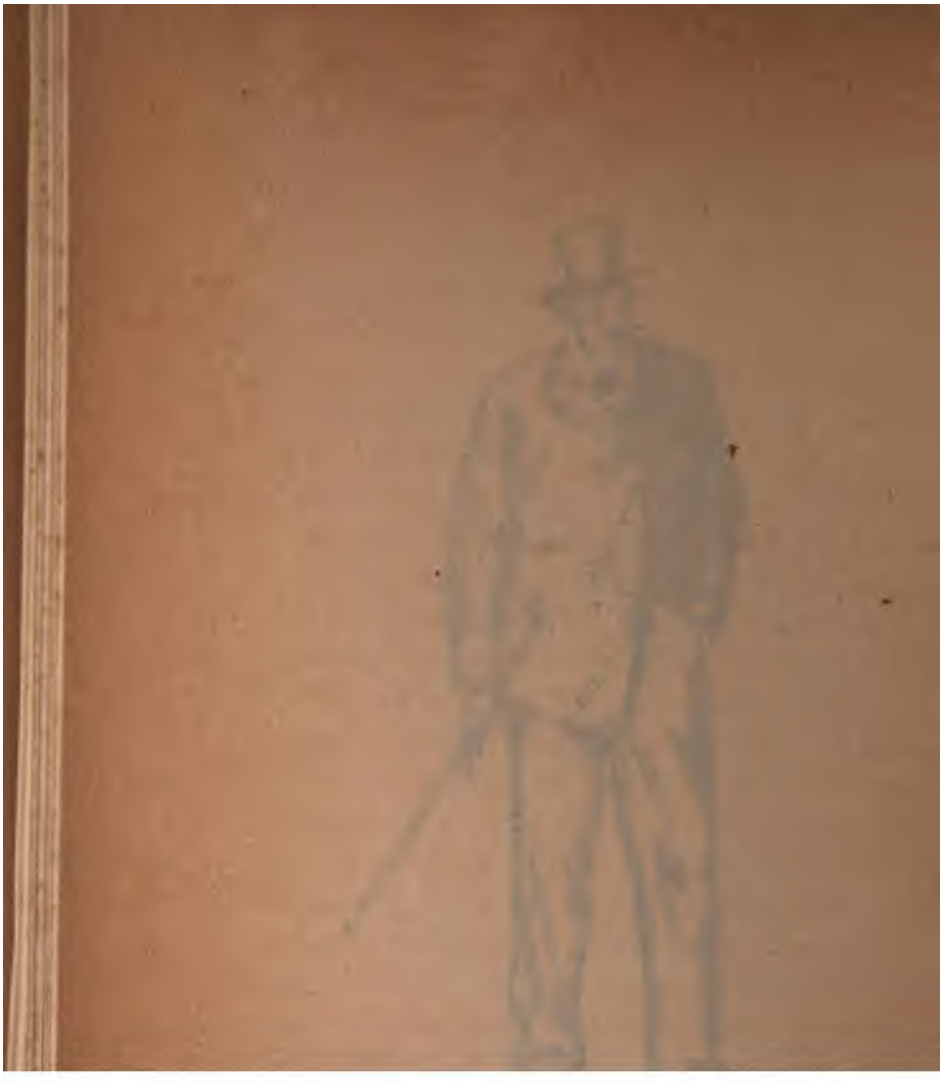
sat over the account-books, deeply engrossed in business, and for once quite unconscious of what was passing.

When Madame saw the gendarmes she experienced an uneasy feeling, but had no suspicion as to the real purpose of their presence, and was about to question them, when the commandant took off his hat and introduced her to those gentlemen, on which they took off their hats and informed her, in the most gracious tones, that they were sorry to incommode her, but they were afraid that her presence would be required for a few moments at the Prefecture.

The commandant gallantly said:

"*Ah! Bah!* I will accompany her."

Léon Richeton 1878



BLAGUEURS.

It is true that the *blagueur* bears the stamp of nationality wherever found; whether belonging to the people, the *bourgeoisie*, or the social circles, whether of the civil, military, or diplomatic class, he has the one impulse of his order, to exaggerate a slight truth into a colossal lie. But it is equally true that the further he is removed from witnesses, the more daringly he boasts, and since Paris is remote from many homes, it is necessarily more rich than most centres in the fraternity of *blagueurs*.

The *blagueur* is for the most part a man of warm temperament, genially disposed, and, strange as it may appear, is not aware, during the ardour of lying, that he lies.

Take the Irish *blagueur;* his mind is so constituted by nature that he cannot see things as they are; he only finds them as they ought to be. He has his hut, it ought to be a mansion; he has his bog, it ought to

be a park; he has his pig, it ought to be a herd of swine. And this is the problem with which he has to deal. So ten miles from home it is but a little farm, a hundred miles away it is a beautiful property, across the water it becomes a fine estate.

Altogether, the Irish *blagueur* in Paris does credit to his nationality.

Indeed, the Celt, wherever he is found, has a tendency to see things in a light that ought to shine, not in the fog that persistently lowers. But the light is in his mind if not outside it, and observing all things there, he believes for the moment all that his imagination portrays. It is so with the Spaniard; he is a prince whatever his station may be. It is so with many a Frenchman who, as a simple act of justice, enrolls himself as a chevalier of the Legion of Honour with Bonaparte on his lips and his hand on his heart, in evidence of his knighthood.

The *blagueur* that you meet in society is often so polished, that the circumstances he blandly relates to you about himself often have an air of truth, and you imagine that you have come across a hero, until some friend, giving you a hint, opens your eyes, and you at once see all the adventures that he has related of himself in the light of a transformation scene. You begin to wonder how you could possibly have credited what

you heard about an Arab princess whose life he had saved after a battle in Algeria. It was credible that he had been on the staff of Marshal S———, and that he had fought at his side; you allow to yourself that he might have rescued from violence the lovely daughter of even the late Dey; so well was this told that when he went on to relate how while floating on the sweet waters of the bay in the calm evening, he was dragged from his boat by half-a-dozen native sailors, and carried away to a ruined castle on the coast, and how this beautiful lady received him there in a still remaining suite of chambers with royal magnificence, you are deeply interested in the man, though at this point of his narrative there was room for misgiving. He told his story with so many whispers of dramatic art that you were more excited than sceptical. But afterwards, when a friend in a kind "aside" inquired, "Has he been telling you one of his *blagues?*" there came an enlightenment with which the whole reality disappeared in a flash.

Whoever goes into literary society in Paris cannot fail to meet here and there with some of the class under review. The literary *blagueur* is a man fairly acquainted with the title-pages of books, and, who being a good listener has, in learning his language, picked up the meaning of authors' names, exactly in the

same manner that he has picked up the meaning of words. He knows that Rabelais means *unclean*, that Montaigne means *thoughtful*, Le Sage, *humorous*, Fénelon, *fabulous*, Rousseau, *amorous*, Voltaire, *sceptical*, Crebillon, *terrible*, Molière, *funny*, Victor Hugo, *incendiary*, Dumas, whom he has actually read, *imaginative, grand, revengeful, picturesque*, and so on, writers' names being part and parcel of his vocabulary, while the titles of books represent something which is like his own sham title—the unknown and the unknowable.

Out of these materials he is enabled with tact to sustain prolonged conversations.

I cannot help thinking that I once came abreast of a well-known British *blagueur* in Paris, if I am allowed to judge by the terms in which he addressed himself to me while dilating on our country: I mean a man whose hand is often visible through the daily press. It was easy to identify him by his style, the opening of his address to me and to his leading articles, was the same—"England is the greatest nation in the world!"

This is a mode of boasting which borders on the sublime, though of course it carries the personal with it, and means that the writer himself is the representative in black and white of all that greatness.

A *blagueur par excellence* of this same sort is the

German: it is true that his opportunities of boasting after his own heart are limited under the present *régime*, but though he practises considerable self-repression on military matters in the presence of Frenchmen, he nevertheless finds occasion for giving utterance to his instincts in the presence of other foreigners. I met frequently in Paris a native of Prussian Saxony who after the utmost inflation that pride can sustain, could not hold within himself all the *parvenue* grandeur that his country had reached after the lucky matter of Sedan, which owing to bad French generalship was captured much in the same manner as the three prisoners who were taken by an Irishman, who, when asked to explain his wonderful feat, said "By Jasus, your Honour, and didn't I surround them!"

The German *blagueur* raises himself by two processes, the first is by depreciating England, the second by elevating his emperor and princes into great generals, while all the time the generalship was done by the chess-player, Moltke. To lower England, he used to say that the British navy was made out of old German gun-boats, and that the officers of the Guards went about London in uniform with umbrellas. Any physiognomist who heard him could read in his noble, energetic face, *L'Allemagne, l'empereur, les princes—c'est moi!*

But perhaps the gymnastic art of drawing the long bow is nowhere so successfully practised as among the tender sprigs of the Russian embassy, wherein the development and growth of diplomacy is made a subject of daily study. If there is anyone who has never spoken to or done more than see at a distance the venial Gortschakoff, it is one of these striplings of a *corps diplomatique*. Yet witness the science of one of these bear-lipped and earnest self-adulators, who eager to be thought the friend of the prince, devised a situation so novel that no one could possibly have shared in it without knowing more of the great minister than had been witnessed by the most favoured of his circle.

"The Prince," he said, "is entirely misunderstood by the press of Europe. I assure you he is of so simple and true a nature that when at his country seat no man sheds more tears over Siberia than he."

But it must be admitted that the infant diplomatist looked all the time as if his master had never once felt a tear in his eye, except on being complimented by his Czar.

Nevertheless this anecdote made the boy a man.

When we consider that the modern Provençal, one of the greatest boasters in France, is the successor of the Troubadours, there is no little doubt cast over the credibility of old song. Every man has his hero:

the Provençal more than all, for he is his own hero, and knows no other. Yet the Gascon surpasses him in one respect, he has never even sung of the deeds of other men; he has only bellowed forth his own,—deeds which match in authenticity the achievements found only in legendary lore.

Then there is the Marseillais boaster, who brings up to Paris his breezes from the south, asserting already that the hymn which bears his name is an old native melody. It is delightful to meet any one of these originals in the metropolis. If he arrived but yesterday, he will have already had his share in some great success. He has stopped a pair of horses, and saved the life of some splendid woman, whom he is on his way to visit. If you meet him at the play, you will hear from him between the acts that the manager of the theatre has to thank him for having made a fortune; if at the *café-concert* where an acrobat has supported fifty kilograms on his outstretched arm, he will have seen a man of three times that strength who has supported one hundred and fifty or even more on his left palm; or if Kikisoki, the Chinaman, has swallowed an infantry sword, he has seen an Arab of the tribe Beni-Saoua swallow a cuirassier's in the middle of dessert without the slightest preparation.

I was one day sitting in one of those common cabarets in that vast open space which faces Père-Lachaise, where fraternity readily springs up among the frequenters, when I recognised a Marseillais who had no one to talk to. Knowing his value, I induced him without much ceremony to partake of a bottle of wine, aware that I need only listen to him while he drank.

It was a sultry morning. His coat, which he had taken off, was at the back of a chair, his tobacco and his cigarette-papers were before him on the table. He was evidently in a tired mood, and drank pretty freely before getting talkative. After a time, he began to enunciate in a boorish brogue the fine principle of self-possession.

"*Mon vieux*," he said, "your behaviour to me has been very different to that of my last companion here, but calm of mind is a very lovely thing. List, and I'll tell you what happened to me—then you'll see that what I say is true. Follow my advice, always be calm, and you'll never go wrong."

It may here be mentioned that the Marseillais invariably begins all his stories in this way with a whole string of prefatory observations, in which he indulges to the full his exceeding love of detail.

"It happened," he continued, "last Sunday, and I

was dressed like a monsieur, and you can guess how well I look then. Well, I came into this *café*, I took off my hat, I took off my overcoat, for you must know I have an overcoat, and I sat down. I drew my tobacco from my pocket, and then my cigarette-papers. I called the waiter, I ordered a cup of coffee. While the waiter brought me my cup of coffee, I rolled up a cigarette. Then I placed my cigarette on the table and put two lumps of sugar in my coffee. It was then only that I saw an individual sitting next to me. And I looked at him and he looked at me and we looked at each other. But we said nothing. Presently this individual took my tobacco and my cigarette-papers. I daresay you fancy I asked him to return them. No, no, you're wrong, I had sworn I would be calm. Well, when he had made himself a cigarette he lighted it, and then he took my coffee! But I said nothing! I remained calm! But you will see. I was to be put to the last proof. Perhaps you think that was all. Oh, no! Presently he got up, took my overcoat and put it on, and left the *café*. And what do you think I did? Guess, oh, no! you can't guess! I called the waiter, and I said to him, 'Waiter, you know that gentleman.'

"'Yes, monsieur,' said he.

"'Very well, then, you saw what he did, you noticed

with what *sang-froid* I contained myself, notwithstanding the indignation depicted on my face?'

"'Yes, monsieur.'

"'Ah! but you don't know that I have sworn to be calm.'

"'Yes, monsieur.'

"'Well, as you know this gentleman, have the goodness to tell him on my behalf that I should consider it as a favour if he would send me back my overcoat before it is completely worn out, and that I am convinced that it was owing to mere absence of mind that he smoked my tobacco, used my cigarette-papers, drank my coffee and put on my overcoat. Say I pardon him. It is well, waiter, *merci*.' And I gave the waiter my card. BASTIDE MARIUS: *Et qué troun de l'air!* And in all this do you not see the blood of my ancestors, you who know the Marseillais?"

THE CONCIERGE.

THE *concierge*—that sentinel of the Paris doorway—is one of the most notable types that is to be met with in the city. It may be new to some when they hear that this virago, so low in the social scale, may have formerly figured conspicuously in the gaieties of the town and have taken her daily drive in the Bois like any other fine lady. Ah! those were merry times she will tell you, trying to look by her smile as young and fresh as she did then.

The early life of the *concierge* accounts for many of her present worldly tastes. She has generally a craze for music; and the one ambition of her old age is to make her daughter learn the piano, enter as a pupil at the Conservatoire, and finally become *artiste*.

The *concierge*, low as she has fallen, has not lost a sense of her old position. She expects to be considered still, though only the *concierge*. If you would

put her in a rage address her as *portière;* call her *piplette* and she will tear out your eyes.

In matters of scandal she excels all the one-sou papers put together. On all that is going on in the quarter, up to a fashionable death, she is an extremely well-informed woman.

The *concierge* spends her abundant leisure in the sitting posture, not idly; she reads the *Petit Journal,* surrounded by her symbols of ladyship—a cat and dog, and these receive her attention more than the occupants of the house.

The *concierge* still indulges in a few sprinklings of gaiety—baptisms among the number, and while absent on these occasions she would have you believe that she is still at her post, and fixes a placard on the banisters on which is written "The *concierge* is upstairs," and the only possible means left you of finding out on what floor your friend lives is by knocking at the first door you come to and apologetically inquiring there.

The *concierge* has her polite seasons; when the proper time arrives no one is more courteous in wishing you a happy New Year than she is. While from the 15th of January to 30th of November she is as a rule disobliging and uncivil, when Christmas approaches with its snows and ice she thaws. She is

wholly unsympathetic, for your own comfort therefore you should pay her well and treat her with much politeness. For instance, if you go out late at night and do not wish to be kept waiting, say, *Cordon, s'il vous plaît,* in a coaxing voice; otherwise you may count on being kept waiting while Madame goes on reading her *feuilleton* with provoking indifference.

Such a porteress as I have described is very commonly met with in large private *pensions*. One encounters her sitting in a glass sentry-box or a side room, from one to two dozen keys, with their numbers engraved on dirty brass labels hanging against corresponding numbers on the wall and a like number of brass candle-sticks, brightly polished, ranged on a slab. There was one answering in most respects to this description at a *pension* where I once lived and about which I have occasion to say a few words.

There was a drawing-room to which the residents retired after dinner, and amused themselves in various ways, and where coffee was served. Some sat over open books, some chatted and laughed over dominoes and cards, and, while someone played at the piano, there were couples sitting demurely at chess, especially so if both parties to the game were not girls.

There was a lady among them whom I had remembered seeing act the part of *soubrette* in a piece at

the Comédie-Française, and I wondered how she was able to spend her evenings continually at the hotel, when at length it transpired that she was giving up all her time to her pupil, Mademoiselle Annette, who was always with her, and who in fact was being trained for the stage. This lady, Mademoiselle Trécourt, frequently played, whilst Annette practised some bright song out of the latest pieces at the Renaissance or the Bouffes.

I became intimate with them. Mademoiselle Trécourt's experiences on all subjects connected with the drama were full of interest, and seeing that I appreciated them, she asked me to accompany her and Annette to the school of elocution and the singing-class.

These were in a quiet street off the Rue Saint-Honoré, and were kept by a little dark man with a large head and a sonorous voice—an ex-tragedian of the Porte Saint-Martin theatre. He carried a sufficient testimonial of his declamatory powers in his voice and hands; every word was faultless, always delivered as if in the presence of an appreciative audience.

His academy was divided into classes, and as the pupils became advanced, they joined the acting-class, for which he had put up a small theatre, where he

invited friends to witness the performances. When we arrived, two of the pupils were rehearsing a dialogue from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and there was even a dramatic interest in watching the master, who really became part of the comedy as he now ground his teeth, and now uttered a "bravo" at the performance.

The room was large, and full of young girls seated on cushioned benches ranged against the walls, while at a piano at one end of the room a middle-aged lady with iron-grey curls, and ample teeth, was continually bringing her finger down upon a note, and nodding to a young girl in the centre of the room, who as often chirped an echo to it.

We had not been there long, when several ladies of the Bouffes-Parisiens and Folies-Dramatiques crowded into the room, bringing a good deal of vivacity with them, on which the eyes of the pupils were so intently focussed, that the place seemed filled with an universal squint.

On our return, as we passed through the gateway, the old *concierge*, who was seated outside her box, got up briskly, and kissed Mademoiselle Annette on both cheeks. I knew the old lady to be somewhat eccentric; still this struck me as strange.

A few days later, I was coming down-stairs from my room, when I heard loud voices below; the *concierge*

was evidently rating somebody at the gate. I stood a moment in hesitation; I felt my arm grasped by a tiny hand, and turning round, I saw Annette. The noise continued.

"Yes, yes," said the *concierge*, "you take care of our Annette, but you leave me to waste my life away as a common servant."

My arm was released; Annette ran back to her room. I descended the stairs, and saw through the open portal an elderly gentleman passing from the house to his carriage.

In this little scene I interpreted the history of Annette, the elderly gentleman, and the *concierge*.

JOHN BULL-BAITERS.

ANYONE with experience of the continent who puts his recollections together, will find that from time to time he has met with a class of men who have very strange and undefined notions respecting the typical John Bull. I myself have encountered many such, but there were two in particular who pursued me so vehemently on the subject, that I could not help calling them my John Bull-Baiters—a term the more appropriate since the more persistent of the two was a Spaniard, and this circumstance no doubt suggested to me the name.

Perhaps there is no people in Europe to whom the name of John Bull is unknown, but the further you go from his habitat the more indistinct men's notions on this subject become.

Of course the Englishman is known everywhere, as well in Constantinople as in Copenhagen, and since he is on the whole very much like other people, he does

not represent that John Bull at home who fills the foreign imagination, consequently very absurd inquiries are often made of our travellers about the wonderful being who stays at home to resist taxation, to assert the rights of the subject, and to coerce the Minister of the day in making peace or war.

I remember being asked by a German if there were not a good many John Bulls in England, with the inquiry whether Mr. Gladstone was a John Bull, he evidently not knowing exactly what he himself meant.

It was in a dancing saloon at the Galeries-Geoffroy, where fashionable youths go to practise their steps before the season begins, that I met with my Spanish John Bull-Baiter. He was a dancing-master, and had to be present in order to watch the progress of his pupils, and to afford them an occasional hint.

He had heard that I was an Englishman, and, edging his way towards me through a crowd, became the instrument of his own introduction, than which none can be more authentic, since no one can be so well acquainted with a man's merits as a man himself.

He presented himself to me with such avidity, that I felt sure he must have something remarkable to say, and so it proved. He informed me that he was much interested in the English races, that he had studied

them long before he left Madrid, but that there was one variety among the number on which he felt the want of further information, and that was the world-famous John Bull.

It appeared that such information as he possessed was derived from Englishmen themselves; whether it had been afforded him in earnest I cannot say; it was certain that he took it *au sérieux*, for he told me with much gravity that he possessed a portrait of Henry VIII., the greatest of John Bulls, of Sir Falstaff, England's most popular *caballero*, that he had pictures of Charles Fox, of Mr. Coke of Norfolk, of the late Duke of York, and last not least the sporting Earl of Derby.

The man had an eager air of credulity, or I should have thought that he was simply humorous on this subject, but such was not the case, for presently when his mood changed and he communicated to me certain little anecdotes which he had picked up in the same manner, I could perceive that he was still earnest, though in the midst of perplexity.

"They tell me," he said, "that the race is tall and large; that they can only sustain their strength by a diet of round of beef and plum-pudding; and that this gives expression to their figure which has great rotundity."

"Yes," I answered, "you are right, he is like a drum; and his arms hang like drum-sticks."

Upon this, with the perspiration of research upon his forehead, he took out his pocket-book and made a note.

"This," he said, "is all very curious."

I had entertained hopes that the drum-sticks would have beaten him off, but no, he was more eager than ever to gather fresh facts, so I tried a new method of getting rid of him.

Assuming that chaffing tone which most men would have interpreted in a moment, I said:

"Would you like to know how he dresses, and who is his tailor?"

To my surprise he answered with an imploring "*Mais, oui.*"

"He takes a natural pride," I said, "in clothing his rotundity; indeed, no man can have seen a real waistcoat who has not seen John Bull in full dress. This waistcoat," I added, "is commonly of buff, with metal buttons; his trousers are of the finest nankeen, with loose straps under Wellington boots. He has a surtout of blue Saxon cloth. He wears a long gold chain, sometimes a red ribbon, with two seals attached to it, one bearing his coat of arms, the other his initials, together with a watch-key, the whole appendage hanging,

like an order of merit, from a watch-pocket on the right side of his trousers. He wears a shirt-frill, and round his neck is a stock or else a neck-tie six inches deep. Added to this a large beaver hat, curled at the sides, and worn at an angle of twenty-five degrees, completes his morning attire."

To my dismay, instead of throwing him off by this device, he held out his hand to shake mine, and, with a gesture of intense confidence in me, exclaimed:

"It is the Duke of York exactly; I have his picture."

For a moment I stood in bodily fear of being embraced.

Trying another tack, I said:

"John Bull has an amazing constitution; he drinks a large tankard of ale at his dinner, besides his sherry, and he is a two-bottle man."

"What is that?" the little Spaniard said, almost jumping from the ground.

"He drinks two bottles of port wine after dinner."

At this announcement the little Spaniard showed me the palms of his hands, and looked into my face as if he had himself told me something which was incredible though it had happened.

At this crisis, while I felt that I was being somewhat strongly bull-baited, I saw him preparing to throw another dart.

"John Bull," said he, "takes much exercise; he boxes?"

I answered, becoming somewhat amused:

"The aristocratic John Bull walks only in one street, to which he drives in his carriage, then slowly walks up and down filling the entire pavement."

"Ah! that is grand!" said he.

"And the crowd walks behind him," I said, "watching everything he does; in fact there is no room to pass; to attempt it would be like a gig vainly trying to wheel round a coach and four."

"Are all the John Bulls grands seigneurs?" he asked.

"No; many of them are great farmers, Coke of Norfolk is a farmer."

"Can the farmers drink much wine?" he went on to inquire.

"Twenty farmers," I answered, "will drink a pipe of port wine at a sitting, and will never leave the table till it is finished, if it takes them as many hours."

Fortunately for me the little Spaniard at this moment was obliged to quit me to make arrangements for the next dance. He begged me to stay where I was, promising to return in a few minutes.

This was my opportunity of escape.

In the course of my experience I have met with

other men who have shown themselves equally mystified by the character of John Bull. I remember one in particular, a French gentleman from the Pyrenees. He had a vague notion that John Bull was a mercantile giant living among other Englishmen of ordinary dimensions: and having no sense of humour, he credited as real the ironical descriptions of John Bull, which he saw copied into the provincial papers.

This gentleman was even bent on a visit to England to see John Bull in his own country, a design which he ultimately carried out with as much seriousness as an Englishman would go to Italy to see a picture. I was in London at the time of his visit, but had forgotten his purpose in coming there.

I took him to all the "shows" that struck me as most likely to interest a foreigner. But though he evinced a lively interest in all he saw, and was not sparing of the characteristic "*très-gentil*," I noticed behind all this a look of unmistakable disappointment in his expression wherever we went. I puzzled for some time over this, but sought in vain for a solution. At last one day we were strolling down St. James's Street arm-in-arm, when my friend, who had been silent during at least a quarter of an hour, brought the tips of his fingers gently down upon my wrist, and exclaimed:

"Mon cher, où est donc Jean Bull? Je ne le vois point—est-ce qu'il est mort? Je suis venu à Londres exprès pour le voir *in the flesh,* et je ne le trouve pas! Dites donc, où est-il?"

Whimsical as may appear the experiences that I have related, the John Bull-Baiter is really a representative type of men who, from various points of view, regard John Bull as a veritable and existent anomaly.

Now I must confess that all this at last set my mind to inquire, what after all had become of the traditional John Bull. It is but a truism to assert that this character once existed, for he actually lived within the memory of man. What has become of him, that we see so little of him now?

This question I talked over with others: the political economists informed me that he was extinct, that he had been the victim of legislation, and that all this came about through the introduction into England of French wines. Nowadays, these said, we take three or four glasses of champagne with our dinner, and afterwards our claret—a fashion in which we are naturally followed by our inferiors. With the disappearance of good old generous port wonderful changes have taken place among us: the evanishment of obesity, also of that aristocratic hereditament gout,

together with the strong assertion of our rights as Britons.

These things, said others of a philosophic turn, lead us into the great truths of Darwinism, namely, the struggle for fat and the non-survival of the fattest. While John Bull was able to drink at the fountain of port he flourished; but as it dried up, the struggle for existence itself set in. Meantime those who could drink at the new fountains of French wines survived and developed into a new species, which has almost entirely replaced the former lord of these isles.

And, certainly, we now see men slim and wiry, oftener pale than red-faced, and with looks that betray the evils of unceasingly late hours, tobacco-smoke, sherry-cobbler, and other light emaciating drinks. Instead of the triple-coloured costume, we now see the monotonous tweed, striped and chequered, often suggestive of the Highlands—whose inhabitants, by the bye, have been crowding us out in an inordinate degree of late years.

In fact, though John Bull has not entirely disappeared, he is rapidly undergoing a metamorphosis; he is fast becoming John Tweed. Whether he will continue to maintain his individuality under this new aspect remains to be seen. He travels over the world in his new attire, and, since the English lead the

fashion in men's dress, as the French do in women's, tweed is adopted by men of every race and colour. This is possibly one of those little things which lead to great results, and may be among the many mysterious influences which are tending to make all people alike.

CAFES AND CAFES-CONCERTS.

SINCE the classical days of François Procope, the *cafés* of Paris have continually gone on increasing in number and variety. Could that enterprising Sicilian obtain a glimpse of Paris as it is, he would indeed be surprised at the thousand luxurious imitations of the once favourite resort in the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie which bears his name.

There is the approved *café* of the Boulevards that we all know, with its bright frescoed ceilings and walls, and its dazzling lustres, illuminating with their glare group upon group of endless Parisian types, who sit smoking, drinking, and playing games of hazard against Time, who, without their seeming to know it, always comes off the winner.

There is the *café* of the side street—a more utilitarian establishment—with its weary *patron* at the entrance, its moody waiters, and its taciturn *habitués*.

Then again the less-known *brasseries*, whose smoke

dimmed mirrors reflect the moving figures of a dozen waitresses, whose glances show eclectic instinct, while their attention is unequally divided among laughing students and sober *employés*. These are but thinly scattered over Paris, except in the Quartier Latin, where they abound, and are the centres to which student life converges. At some of these the young ladies wear an uniform; but this has been objected to by the police, and in some cases been put a stop to, as, for instance, in the one nicknamed the "*Ecossaise*," where the Highland dress might be seen in all its pristine beauty. At the Café de Médicis they still dress in blue uniform and lace caps—a merry place on Sunday nights, greatly frequented by students and the military. There are hosts of others—the Source, the Café des Ecoles, the Chericobbler, and, noisiest of all, one in the Rue de la Harpe. Here, on a sort of daïs at the further end of the room, music and dancing are the order of the evening, and are continued sometimes far into the night, amidst the loud plaudits of lookers-on.

These places are much visited by street minstrels and mendicants of every kind, whose instincts tell them to catch human nature in her merry moods. So, while you sit there in a reverie, you are liable to be awakened by the low moan of a flute, and, looking up,

you see an old white-haired man, broken and worn, regarding you with senile smiles, and blowing the last remnants of his breath away—or, maybe, some sun-scorched, ragged urchin of Savoy, holding a bunch of withered flowers in his hands, and gazing pleadingly, with his large eyes, into your face.

But more amusing than any of these is perhaps that hybrid establishment—the *Café-Concert*. Not of the "Eldorado" or "Alcazar" type—those hot, crowded, glaring saloons upon the Boulevards—where gaudy pretension invites vice to do it honour, but those many smaller *cafés* of Montmartre, St. Denis, and Montparnasse, where the amusement is free—as inseparable from the *consommation* as the *petit verre* from the cup of over-burnt coffee.

There is something pleasant in the easy understanding that exists among all parties at these lesser *cafés;* the singers are not of the isolated unapproachable kind as on the larger stage; there is not an impassable gulf between the *ouvrier* and the comic man, and a lively interchange of pleasantries is kept up between the large audience and the little stage. These places vary according to the *quartier* in which you find them, and there is a marked difference in the style of the singers, the *habitués*, and the scale of prices, as you near the *barrières;* in fact, often in their neighbour-

hood you get only a bloused audience. The earnings of the singers range from two to five francs a night, and rarely, if ever, exceed the latter amount. But though these humble performers seldom rise higher, tradition is juster to them than history is to many heroes; it preserves the particulars of their career as accurately as a court-circular records the trivial actions of princes.

Of the hundreds of these *cafés-concerts* that tend to enliven the rather gloomy *faubourgs*, the Café de Musette may be taken as a fair example. This is a *café* visited by the *boutiquiers* and *ouvriers* of the Faubourg Saint-Denis, after their day's work is done. Here they eagerly mass together to listen to the performances of their favourites. It is much crowded at times, especially on Sunday nights, but everybody is so *complaisant*, and the entertainment so diverting, that comfort is cheerfully dispensed with.

Indeed, one night at the Café de Musette, the place was so crammed that a band of *gamins* coming in a little late made the spiral staircase their gallery; and so pleased were they at their good fortune in finding a place, that they formed themselves into a voluntary *claque* during the performance, and scattered broadcast their approval of the songs and singers in the purest *argot*. The Café de Musette is not large, but accommodates a considerable audience, the *patron*

having economised space to the last available corner by ranging benches in close file from one end of the room to the other with a strip of board facing each, in pew-fashion, whereon are placed the various *consommations*. The stage, placed in one corner of the room, is at most eight feet long by as many wide, so that there is not more than enough room for the three ladies who are seated there; nevertheless, with histrionic tact, these assume an air of comfort though they have it not, and fan themselves in languishing ease as the room fills with their admirers; but the comic man, a great gun at these places, is obliged to find a resting place with any intimates he may have among the crowd. The entertainment being free, the singers judge it their right to indulge in a few irregularities, especially in the way of humorous interpolations, and so modify the programme according to their taste or humour.

At eight o'clock not a seat is vacant, and the *sergent de ville* entering, there are general signs of a beginning. The winking lustres brighten, and wink again; the gentleman of the large shirt-front and Bardolphian nose, after a due arrangement of his rings and cuffs, sprawls an overture upon a jarring piano; and the three ladies on the stage, having re-adjusted their wayward toilet, fan themselves with renewed energy, as if to rouse the flickering inspiration of their languid

souls. These preliminaries at an end, the centre lady rises smilingly, and approaches the foot-lights. Even whilst sitting, she had a somewhat formidable appearance, and towered over her slim sisters; but now that she has risen, it is clear that an Amazon is before us. She delicately holds a scroll of music in her fat fingers; and when, with an almost threatening gesture, she begins her song, she literally "fills the stage." Her voice is deep and tremulous; and as she quavers forth each point of sentiment, how graceful are the circles she describes with her huge arms! Not less graceful is her slight but stately recognition of the plaudits showered upon her when her song is ended; and when recalled, she turns like some great world to give the lesser stars their turn.

Several songs follow, both comic and sentimental, and even a dance is essayed, but is gone through with indifferent success upon the narrow stage. This gives cause for much laughter, and the audience encourages the attempt. Then there is a pause, and this occasion is seized by the bevy of *gamins* on the staircase to indulge in a little chaff, and they eagerly look round the room in search of someone against whom to point their personalities. Generally their choice falls upon the *jeunes filles*, nor are they satisfied till they have set them all blushing and

giggling. In the meantime, someone is busily engaged behind a rusty curtain preparing himself for an ovation.

Presently the curtain flies aside, and the comic man strides the stage with a jaunty self-pleased air, costumed *en Anglais* with all the popular incongruities. The audience is delighted, for now they will be treated to the magnified eccentricities of a John Bull, and all in twenty minutes. The comic man, in the choice of his toilet, like a true artist, has gone in for large and striking effects. He has perched his high white hat at the back of his head, while he concentrates all the gaping stupidity he can muster between two bristling red whiskers; his suit of brown tweed is a mass of yawning pockets, and bespotted with the quaintest diagrams, and there is an uncomfortable plenitude about his collar and wrist-bands. In an execrable accent he recounts, to the delight of the audience, the many mishaps he has had in the city, and the performance coming to an end with a *gigue anglaise*, the company disperses echoing "English spoken," "Yes, yes," and other familiar sounds.

But sometimes there is a quarrel and general *mêlée* at the close; then is observable the difference between the duties of the *sergent de ville* and our own police in places of public entertainment. The one attends only

to what is said, the other to what is done. If treason is hinted on our stage, the policeman is but one of the audience, but in a "row" he becomes at once the hand of the law. In France you are much more welcome to commit violence, within bounds, than to utter it—the former offence is venial, the latter punishable "according to the utmost rigour of the law."

THE POISSARDE.

To do the *poissarde* justice, she should be seen on an Amazon river, which the Seine is not, or better, by the sea-side on a windy day, grasping a dolphin and raging against a storm.

Paris, like all other large cities, has its different climates: the country-air climates of the boulevards; the town-air climates of the as yet unplanted streets; the sea-air climate of the Halles Centrales, but this latter has its peculiar odour: should you have been at Etretat during the whole of August, without a breath of air for weeks, while all the time the smell of fish has been accumulating on the beach, you will readily recognise the climate of the Halles Centrales.

The principle applies equally to interiors; indeed, the influence of climate is very remarkable, even to its modifying influence on sex; the very professions show this. While the draper's is in its nature minine, that of the barber may be called neuter

(accordingly he has the confidences of both sexes), but that of the *poissarde*, filled by the most tremendous of women, is male; in fact, for all business purposes, she may be regarded as a man; nevertheless, whatever you may think, you must not address her as Monsieur.

The smell of bombazine at a draper's probably has be-widowing influences on the assistants, for they are not only effeminate but mournful in their dress. In like manner the perfume of lavender gives its delicacy to the barber's manners; effects parallel with those produced on the fair sex by the invigorating odour of fish.

Sea-air is always thought nourishing, and it certainly appears to be so, for the Paris beauties go to it pale with the night-air of a season weighing upon their complexions, and come away as if they had daily taken a vermilion bath instead of merely bobbing up and down in salt water; how much more nourishing then must be the fishy air which is breathed by the red-faced *poissarde*—a truth not difficult of explanation since fish is nothing but a concrete essence of the sea itself.

The *poissarde* is called the Queen of the Halles; she dominates there by means of those great qualities which are necessary to govern the lower orders,—she

is uncouth, insolent and decisive; she has that withering command of speech which, like a prevailing wind, causes everyone to bend before it, just as at the seaside the trees grow away from the waves in order that they may be as far off from them as possible when a storm rises.

As with governing families, the craft of the *poissarde* is hereditary; but, in womanly defiance of Salic law, it descends from mother to daughter.

The traffic that daily fills the Rue Montmartre begins early, and is at its height when the fish-carts from one railway-station, the butchers' carts, the greengrocers' carts, the florists' carts from others, begin to arrive at the Halles Centrales. There is soon a block, and the driver of each cart is seen standing upright grasping his whip at its middle part, the thong tangled in his fingers in one hand, and his reins in the other, while he shouts to someone in front of him, who, in the same attitude, and under similar circumtances, is already occupied in shouting to someone else. When a Frenchman is in a hurry he is excited; when he is in a great hurry he storms, and so these drivers look like so many captains of the commissariat, some with a convoy of fish-baskets, others with convoys of carrots in their charge, who, while endeavouring to command each other with oaths inferior

only to bombs in explosiveness, aim at restoring order.

Advancing along the pavement on both sides of this mob of tumbrils are to be seen the cooks, the *garçons*, the hotel-keepers, the housewives, all bent on laying in their store for the day at the early market. Here, under the clack of some spent-oath, an unclean "Boots" is chaffing a neat "grisette," who bears it very well; then a man of all work may be observed, watching the horses as he passes along, and starting aside if they move their heads, as if his arm had once been snapped at by a crib-biter; a third group may consist of those old and highly-shrivelled dames, already in neat caps and coloured shawls, their arms laden with empty baskets, which they are going forward to replenish with fruits and flowers, to sell at the corners of the streets.

At eight o'clock *La Criée* begins in the Halles, so the uproar is called when the fish-baskets are brought in. It is the cry of the *facteurs à la Halle*, the men employed to dispose of the fish for those who despatch it from the coast. The hubbub is deafening, the *crieurs* taking the lead in it and bellowing out prices, while the *poissardes* compete with each other in securing such fish as they require for the day's market.

"*Allons, allons,*" says the *crieur*, "*à combien le*

hareng ; cinq francs, cinq francs cinquante, six francs, c'est bien vu, bien compris, bien entendu, personne ne dit mot, six francs, j'ai dit six francs à Juliette."

Those who enter the busy scene, not as purchasers but as observers, keep at a respectful distance from the fish-stall, lest they should be invited to buy, and content themselves with stopping to listen while a bargain is going on. The buyers, casting their eyes eagerly over those well-stored slabs, habitually accept the position of things as natural ; but the thinker, less accustomed to such sights, reflects how these passive occupants of a miniature marble-beach, after frisking out their season in the free waters, have at last landed on a civilized shore, and have become the subjects of the *poissarde*, who still seems to care for them in their last illness, as she lays them straight and points to them with a finger of love.

Her mouth, when she is dealing with doubtful customers, often falls into the stolid expression of a cod-fish, and, when irritated, she gives vent to all the slang which that sturdy fish would have uttered, if endowed with speech, between its capture and the moment when, with glazed eyes, it resigned itself to the prospect of a fish-kettle.

The place is now crowded with all kinds of customers, whose characters are pretty well known to the

poissarde, from the well-dressed caterer of the Hôtel Bristol, down to the lad from some small *pension,* and they are treated accordingly with respect or ironical abuse. She submits gaily but shruggingly to the prices proposed by the former; but when the latter offers her three francs instead of four for some suitable dish, she cries:

"Ho, ho," and laughs with the bark of a sea-lion; "three francs was far too dear for your little pocket, was it? Would you like me to put it in ice and carry it to your house myself, all for three francs, or would you like me to make it two francs, just to please you?"

The *poissardes* of two neighbouring slabs have a running dialogue which they open on the approach of a likely customer, as soon as he is within hearing.

"There's no longer such a thing as getting a living in this *Marée,*" one will say.

"No," says the other, "the fish comes to us as dear as if they had to be fed for twelve months on sprats before they are taken and brought up here, though they are grazing for nothing all the year round."

Then one of them will break out: "What can I offer you, my little monsieur?" and then the other will cry, "*Allons, allons, mes petites dames, achetez-moi une*

belle truite, un beau merlan, tenez, c'est frais comme l'air."

There are groups of men passing to and fro who have large orders to give, about which, as yet, they are totally indifferent, not having finished the discussion of their masters' affairs. While carrying on their confidences, they take a cursive glance at the stalls in passing, sometimes picking up a pretty nod and honeyed smiles from some young *poissarde* who, still in her teens, is packed in full-grown woman's attire without any slope left between her neck and feet, suggesting to you how the mummies looked while alive before being daubed all over with hieroglyphics. But these loiterers are not proof against the pretty face of eighteen rising out of its swaddlings.

The youthful Amazon is a fine sight; a coquettish look from her will often soften the heart of a *facteur*, and bribe him to knock down one of his best lots to her mother, at a price so complimentary as almost to constitute an offer for her hand.

In the crowd of well-known characters who frequent the Halles Centrales, there is one often to be seen whose presence among the buyers tells those who have forgotten the day that it is Friday. He walks about with his finger inside his breviary, and has the air of chaplain to the market. The *poissarde*, who secretly

regards him as the enemy of society and decries him as such on great communistic occasions, treats him personally as that physician of the soul who prescribes fish for mankind, the consumption of which he increases by the pious fiction that it is not flesh, even in salmon. On this ground he is so honoured by the *poissarde* that she drops her *argot* as unscriptural on inviting his attention to her beautiful turbot, her nice mackerel, and her lovely soles. When he determines on a lot, and the price is agreed on, she throws at least one more into the bargain, for she naturally remembers her sins in dealing with the priest, and is sure that he is thinking of them too; so by giving him a fish over she elicits his smile, and accepts it as so much absolution and forgiveness.'

OFF TO THE "BAINS DE MER."

Now for the sea-side.

It is the *saison morte*; Babylon is dead; it is in social ruins; Parisians are flying from their pet boulevards in as hot haste as the king and court left Whitehall at the outbreak of the Great Plague. One desire sways the town, one thought occupies all minds —*bains de mer*, Dieppe, Trouville, Etretat. The city is left a prey to phantoms in tweed, who flit through from the other side of La Manche to the melting Alps. You feel you can no longer stay in it, for what is Paris without the Parisians? Etretat is the place; there, by a hasty deduction, you think yourself sure of meeting under a more natural aspect, at least a few of those who for months past have contributed to your pleasures.

You seek the station of St. Lazare, and, after a rather wearying journey of five hours, you reach Havre to find it just waking up from its night's rest. It is

too early for cab or diligence, so you take it leisurely down the main avenue from the station and pass the Hôtel-de-Ville, early clad in befitting tricolors and awaiting the sunshine.

The good citizens of Havre have as yet scarcely glanced at the new day. In the empty streets it is an event to meet more than a drowsy *sergent de ville*. If more than a stray dog crosses your path it is some enterprising *restaurateur*, who comes early from his roost to peck at fresh arrivals, holding in his outstretched claw a *carte* and proffering you a choice of viands. He is generally a loquacious German practised in many tongues, who, before he gives you up, addresses you in them all. Before he begins you instinctively gather up your rug, hand-bag, and umbrella, and assume the attitude of flight. At this he doubles his pace, and at last, after many attempts ending in failure, he still presses his card upon you with a whining politeness not to be withstood. Putting the card into your pocket for future perusal, you glance back with curiosity and find your pursuer has pounced on a new victim.

Going on towards the market-place you are enlivened by quite a gathering of old birds just shaking their feathers about the half-uncovered fruit stalls. These, with their callow heads, watery eyes

and yellow skins, who keep the early market, you would be tempted to liken, but for their octogenarian aspect, to a nest of voracious fledglings as they thrust out their necks at you; then rises up the hateful line:

"Eves octogénaires sur qui pèse la griffe effroyable de Dieu.'

They invite you to taste of their luscious fruits piled upon the stalls. Your first impulse is to accept, but on seeing the galaxy of sun-tipped flies wildly pirouetting round each particular heap, you somehow abstain.

On reaching the dingy cathedral your eyes fall upon two crows, as the Paris *gamins* call the priests. On seeing you they separate; the shorter, settling his glossy robe, makes for the sea, which glitters at the end of the street, while the taller, turning his jet eye in an opposite direction and gently raising his shovel-hat, makes for you. His suavity disarms you. He puts a few questions. Monsieur is travelling? Monsieur is Anglais? Monsieur desires a hotel? All this you admit as if at confessional; having admitted it in grudging monosyllables, you hear with pride, "*Monsieur parle bien le Français!*" This time your modesty protests with a smile. Somehow after this you feel under his wing, and walking alongside

him, you know not whither, you find him disembarrassing you of your belongings. He has laid soft hands upon your rug; he is as good as in possession of your handbag and umbrella. You look aghast at this amiable condescension and receive for answer—

"*Je suis garçon d'un hotel à coté vous savez.*"

You can't speak for amazement, and your imagination shoots away in all directions to seek a solution of the inconsistency. To reconcile to yourself the idea of a priest-waiter seems impossible; so you give it up. "But, Monsieur, I want to go to Etretat," you cry in despair. "*Bon*," says the priest-waiter, "the omnibus for Etretat starts from our hotel directly."

You are conducted back through the market and past the fruit-stalls, and you fancy you notice a flutter among the squaws as you are borne along. In another moment you are urged forward, feel yourself raised in somebody's strong arms, and wake from the nightmare of the last five minutes to find yourself on the *impériale* of a clumsy diligence bound for Etretat. Three bony horses, fastened with rough harness to this heavy vehicle, are champing their bits and resenting, with their long tails, the merciless attacks of flies.

The driver, a sturdy hirsute Norman, is helping some sleepy-looking passengers to ascend the steps behind, while Boots is hoisting baggage on the roof, much to the annoyance of a white, sharp-nosed terrier that keeps up a continual yelp as he moves from one end of the roof to the other. All things arranged, the driver comes round to his horses, leaps on the box, and shouting to them like a Turcoman, sets them in full gallop over the ill-paved streets.

As he cracks his long whip over the ears of the leader, you indulge yourself in discovering a striking likeness between him and William the Conqueror. The illusion is aided by a *casquette* he wears, shaped like a crown. Meantime, while your mind whisks back eight hundred years and finds itself amongst Norman barons, the omnibus has shot through the town and is rolling up a steep road towards which vast sunny corn-fields radiate on all sides.

The sun has already gained ascendancy and is attacking your head, while clouds of dust, kicked up by the fast-flying steeds, afford you the wrong kind of shelter from the burning rays as the diligence dashes on.

But this speed is not to last long. The horses soon begin to slacken their pace, droop their heads, and lapse into a walk. William the Conqueror too

hangs his head and has grown oblivious; but, dropping his whip, he is roused from an incipient nap, and, snatching it up just in time to save it, he sets up a war-cry that lifts the horses from their stupor, and sends them cantering as if pursued by some demon horse-catcher.

Thus the diligence jolts over long white lines of road, through villages, past *châteaux* and belts of trees, to come upon new and seemingly interminable white lines of road again and again. As a rule, each white line of road leads to an isolated *cabaret*, at which the great William never fails to stop.

During these halts a number of mysterious looking individuals, with copper-coloured skins and loose blouses, issue from barn-doors to gape at the consignment of citizens the Conqueror is bringing through their country. After some few repetitions of this sort of thing, the journey begins to strike you as decidedly tedious. William of a sudden has dropped out of historical interest; the corn-fields have lost much of their golden charm; your brain is by this time cooked! One idea possesses you—it becomes a monomania—when will this fearful journey have an end? Every now and then you brighten up as a new village is reached, a fresh corner turned, but hope is dashed to the ground by ever-recurring long lines of white road.

By this time you have fathomed the policy of William the Norman. You know he left Havre in a triumphant gallop; you know how, at the sight of any other vehicle on the route, his horses can assume an energy though they have it not, and break into a heavy canter. So when, at a downward incline in the road,—no village, no vehicle within eyeshot—the long whip is set cracking in mid-air, and the familiar war-cry is again heard, you jump with ecstasy to the conclusion that Etretat will at last heave in sight.

You are right. Far down at the bottom of the hill glitters the bright grey sea. It sparkles as though heaven had dropped its stars upon its glassy floor. Your former self revives! William the Conqueror lives again! The bottom of the hill is gained, lanes become streets, Norman yokels become tourists, and the great William, proud as a charioteer, rattles by and makes his victorious entry into Etretat.

Etretat, a pet haunt of Parisian *artistes* and their crowd of admirers, where Offenbach is staying, lies in a narrow bay between two cliffs. It boasts the usual accessories of a sea-side place, with the supplementary advantage of a casino at which your old favourites disport themselves in music and song. It has a shingly beach, upon which loiterers form with their chairs an arena round the bathers, who, dressed from

top to toe, undergo in the hands of French sailors something not unlike sheep-washing and are sent dripping one after another up to the cabin against the cliff, whilst lookers-on criticise and enjoy. Towards half-past ten both bathers and loiterers begin to thin and wander towards their hotel, hanging about it in a sun-scorched yard, where they await the announcement of *déjeûner.*

The breakfast, you are told, is the usual *déjeûner à la fourchette* you get at bathing-places; and you can see at a glance that the people who sit down to it have all changed their identity, and have become sea-side types. You think what a curious thing it is this mania for disguise by which a holiday crowd is invariably possessed, and you speculate as to whether comfort is to be found in eccentricity of dress.

You have chosen this place in the hope of meeting some of your friends among the company, but you see few as yet: they will all come in due time. It is true you espy certain young ladies you remember having come across on the Seine at Asnières, but they can recognize you only roguishly—en gigglesque—from under their long eye-lashes as they reply abstractedly to the question put by the moustachioed *gaillard* at their side.

At the extreme end of the table, surrounded by a

group of eager listeners, you see M. Alphonse Le F——, the opera-bouffe writer, who is, as usual, flinging broadcast those delicious *bons mots* for which he is so famous, and which are being snapped up voraciously by a bevy of guffawing histrions around him. But what do you care for the *bons mots* of M. Alphonse Le F——, or for the insensate nothings of enfranchised actors, or for anything else ?

Your eyes have from time to time fallen upon a couple half-way down the table who seem to have found no difficulty in making one another's acquaintance. A process of wonder has evidently been going on in your mind as to what class of English that young man can belong who is talking so facilely to that pretty girl, whose answers are one continuous ripple of smiles through a nice mouth and faultless rows of teeth, but whose eyes never turn to his, while they laughingly light up her peach-blossom complexion.

What is it in both of them that equally puzzles you ? There are gentlemen born whose every article of dress is a libel upon them. This man is not ill-attired, but it is in an entire suit of that blue cotton fabric which time out of mind has been the delight of the butcher, and what adds to the similitude which suggests itself is that he wears a

blood-red neck-tie, which gutters down a blameless shirt, and is secured by a carved ivory ring from the Cantons. Now what in the name of Stulz is this man? He has neither beard nor moustache; his mouth, surrounded by a blue complexion, a tint left by black hair, is decidedly aristocratic; a mouth that is small, cool of utterance and suggestive of champagne and hock rather than of the grosser drinks; but his hair is indifferently cut and brushed. The girl, who is perhaps well dressed, has evidently an instinct of his suitability, stranger as he is to her, while she favours him with her exquisite inanities, insupportable were she only plain.

Whilst you are wondering whether a girl who never looks you in the face, but still holds you within the spell of her pretty ways, can be called a flirt, who should enter the room but your distinguished friend Freiherr von R——, whom you habitually meet in the *salons* of Paris. He looks as supercilious as you looked amused at the various groups at table.

He takes his seat. He recognises you at his right hand with hearty good-will. His napkin is in a moment unfolded. His jewelled hand is held up and two waiters are at his side. He orders his bottle of

Château Laroux, his *curaçoa*. His soup is placed before him by an anxious waiter who evidently knows his man. He tastes it and it is dismissed. The *bouilli* approaches him; he holds up his finger and it recedes. It is replaced by something more to his taste. He makes a rapid *déjeûner*, taking his glass of Laroux after each course. Then comes a delicate cup of coffee, which he follows up with *curaçoa*. His manners, except that he now and then addresses himself to you, are those of a man who is breakfasting alone in his own house, so graceful is he and so perfectly at his ease. Offering you a cigar and inviting you to accompany him to the beach, you leave the room together.

Your first meeting with this remarkable man was at Buda-Pesth. On that occasion you accompanied him to the now far-famed mines on his property, the expenses of opening which were at one time accumulating so rapidly that they threatened to swallow up the whole of his estate; but he was a man of invincible courage and enterprise. When he had spent almost his last gulden the mines began to pay, and he is now one of the richest men in the Austrian Empire.

You are pleased to have met a friend; you are pleased at everything—the truth is that, inebriated by

the sea air after a long sojourn in Paris, you are in high spirits, having perhaps just finished writing a book, and you look about you with pitying eyes for someone among the company who has come here only to begin one.

THE END.

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